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HERMAN OF UNNA:

Mary A *Lenox*

SERIES OF ADVENTURES

OF THE *Unions*

FIFTEENTH CENTURY,

IN WHICH THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECRET TRIBUNAL
UNDER THE EMPERORS WINCESLAUS
AND SIGISMOND, ARE DELINEATED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

WRITTEN IN GERMAN

BY PROFESSOR KRAMER.

— *Kramer* —
VOLUME I. *K.*

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W. JONES.

1794.

THE
 HISTORY OF
 THE
 EMPIRE OF
 THE
 ROMANS
 BY
 THE
 REV. J. G. BURTON, D.D.
 VOL. I.

The author of the following work
 is known in Germany for the em-
 phatic illustration in one of
 their universities for his later
 very productive literary labors
 celebrated since of Alibiade.
 The present performance is gene-
 rally interesting not only for the
 merit of the story, but for the in-
 formation it affords as respecting
 the latest wisdom and civilization
 which, though it could never be
 traced to its roots, made monarchs
 tremble upon their thrones. It was
 composed at Rome, that a hundred
 years



P R E F A C E

THE author of the following work is known in Germany for the eminent situation he holds in one of their universities, and for his literary productions, particularly his celebrated piece of Alcibiades.

The present performance is generally interesting, not only for the merit of the story, but for the information, it affords us respecting the secret tribunal, an institution which, though it could never be traced to its recesses, made monarchs tremble upon their thrones. It was composed of more than a hundred

thousand individuals, held together by an invifible chain, known to each other, but indiftinguifhable to the reft of ~~the~~ world, whose fittings were covered with the moft impenetrable fecrecy; whose decrees were arbitrary and defpotic, and were executed by affaffins whose fteel feldom failed to reach the heart of its unfortunate victim.

In this fituation we have a ftriking example of the evils in which ignorance and impofition are capable of involving[on] mankind. The confequences that follow, when men yield up their underftandings to the dictate of authority, are dreadful and deftructive beyond the power of human penetration to calculate. This is but a fmall part, and, however dreadful and deteftable, is comparatively

P R E F A C E.

v

tively an insignificant part, when we contrast it with auricular confession, the inquisition, the star-chamber, the court of high commission, and the bastile. Let us remember this, and congratulate ourselves that we are born in an age of illumination, and at a time when the artifices of superstition and tyranny are fated to vanish before the torch of truth.

In addition to this high historical moral, this romance has another merit by which it is farther allied to *history* history. It comprises a curious detail as to the character and adventures of the emperor Wenceslaus, the empress Sophia, Sigismond, king of Hungary, and Queen Barbe, together with the manners of the antient chevaliers, monks and nuns of those times. These portraits are in gene-

ral of distinguished fidelity, and introduce us as it were to the personal intercourse of men, the dates only of whose transactions are handed down to us in chronicles.

The translator has prefixed to the work an essay on the secret tribunal and its judges, by Baron Bock, which will probably be thought an useful accompaniment to the majority of readers.

ESSAY.

ESSAY

ON THE

SECRET TRIBUNAL and its JUDGES, formerly existing in WESTPHALIA,

Extracted from the Second Volume of the
Miscellaneous Works of Baron Bock.

THE free courts and free judges of Westphalia, whose power and constitution rendered them so famous and redoubtable about the beginning of the fifteenth century, that they were on the point of experiencing as rigorous a persecution as the Templars, are at present nearly forgotten, few traces of them being preserved in history. The singularity of this institution, of which so little is known, and which has a near resemblance to that of the *illuminated*, so rapid in its progress within these two or three years in Germany induces me to give some account of it here.

The origin of the free counts and free judges may be traced back to the reign of Charlemagne. They pretended to be the successors of the imperial commissioners (*missis per tempora discurrentibus*), who made their circuits through the empire once a year or oftener. To these commissioners complaints might be preferred against the governors of provinces, and other principal officers; and before them might be pleaded causes of which the decision belonged exclusively to the emperor. It appears too, that the ordinary magistrates had no power to inflict severer punishment than pecuniary fines, so that these commissioners were the sovereign judges of almost all causes, having the power of condemning in the emperor's name to corporal pains, either those whose crimes were such, that the sentence was not allowed to be commuted for a mulct, or those, who, refusing to pay what they had been amerced by the common judge, incurred the guilt of rebellion.

The nature of this commission required two different kinds of proceeding; one public, the other private. Sorcery, magic, and sacrilege, ranked in the class of crimes not to be committed; and respecting these inquiry must necessarily be made in secret. Hence may be inferred, that if the first

sittings

sittings of this tribunal were held in public, there were others to which every body might not be admitted.

As it was not practicable for these commissioners to remain long in one place, their proceedings were usually conducted in a summary way. In general two persons of known probity, sometimes more, were chosen in each district: these, being sworn, were charged to examine into the crimes of the accused, and on their report sentence was definitively passed.—The names of these jurors were carefully concealed, that they might not be mistrusted, so that people lived in perpetual disquietude, and a man could repose no confidence even in his own brother.

If we compare these extraordinary commissions, established by Charlemagne, with the secret tribunal, which was posterior, we shall find between them the most perfect resemblance.

The sittings of the latter were called free proceedings (*freidinge*); the place where they were held, free tribunal (*freie stuhl*); the commissioner, a free count (*freigraf*); and the jurors, free judges (*frieschoeppen*). The duke of Saxony, who was the sovereign chief of the commissioners in the time of Charlemagne, held the same rank in the free tribunals; in which quality he had the right of pre-

senting to every seat, and nominating the free counts, who were afterwards invested with their offices by the emperor as feudaries.

At this tribunal, as at the old, offences of all kinds were tried; complaints were received against those, who refused to be tried by their regular judges; and the sittings were held in the open air, though there were others in secret, where the principal business was conducted. From the latter circumstance is derived the name of secret tribunal *heimliche amt*. The people knew not the free judges, who were bound by a terrible oath to deliver up father, mother, brother, sister, or friend, without exception, if they had done any thing cognizable by the tribunal. In such cases they were obliged to relate all they knew concerning the affair, to cite the culprits, and, if they were condemned, to put them to death wherever they found them. Thus the members of the tribunal, in quality of imperial commissioners, maintained the authority of the emperor throughout the whole extent of the empire, without troubling themselves about the rights of the territories in which they exercised their power; and would infallibly have overturned every other territorial sovereignty, had they continued to subsist.

The secret tribunal is mentioned in history, as an establishment publicly known, so early as 1211, soon after the extinction of the grand duchy of Saxony. Before that time the free counts probably derived their powers from the dukes of Saxony, by whom they were undoubtedly nominated as sovereign chiefs of the imperial commissioners. It was not, therefore, till after the extinction of that duchy, that the secret tribunals were known publicly. No prince of the empire would longer suffer in his dominions an imperial commission, independant of his control; and every one consequently endeavoured to become himself the chief of that commission. The archbishop of Cologne, who had obtained the duchy of Westphalia, was the only person who opposed this; and so effectually, that throughout almost all Westphalia, he was acknowledged sole chief of the secret tribunals. For a time the free counts of that country were nominated by him, and of him received the investiture of their offices.

In this state the secret tribunals remained for some time: but towards the end of the fourteenth, and beginning of the fifteenth century, they suddenly rose to so formidable a degree of power, that all Germany

Germany became alarmed. I shall not, I believe, exaggerate, if I say, that at this period there were more than a hundred thousand free judges in the empire, who put to death, in all manner of ways, those whom the tribunal condemned.—When in Bavaria, in Franconia, in Suabia, any one refused to appear before his regular judge, immediately recourse was had to one of the free tribunals of Westphalia, where sentence was passed, which was no sooner known to the order of free judges, than a hundred thousand assassins were set in motion, who had sworn not to spare their nearest relation, or their dearest friend.

If a free judge were known to say to a person condemned by the secret tribunal, whom he wished to save, “The bread of any other country is as good as the bread of this,” a mode of expression used on those occasions, his comrades were bound by their oath to hang him up on the first tree, seven feet higher than any other criminal. To the sentences passed by this tribunal no demur was to be made. They must be executed out of hand, with the utmost punctuality, and the most implicit obedience, though the person to whose lot it fell had considered the person condemned as the most virtuous man in

in the world. This induced almost all persons of birth and fortune to seek admission into the order. Every prince had some free judges in his council; and there were some even amongst the magistrates of the Imperial cities *. In those days more gentlemen were free judges than are now free masons. In the process which the city of Osnabruck had to carry on against Conrad of Langen, when the latter was condemned, near three hundred free judges were present at the sitting, of whom part was of the order of nobility, part simple burghers †. In short, many princes also sought admission, as the duke of Bavaria, the margrave of Brandenburg, &c.

The servile obedience exacted by the secret tribunai from it's members, appears in the following speech of duke William of Brunswic, who was one of the free judges: "I must hang duke Adolphus of Sleswic, if he come to see me, or my comrades will hang me ‡."

* Werlich relates, in his *Chronicles of Augsberg*, p. 2. c. 9. that there were thirty-six judges in the city of Augsberg alone. From this an estimate may be formed how many there were in the whole of Germany.

† Beim. Kress. vons archid. Wessen, in App. p. 161.

‡ John von Batsche de Reform. Monst. III. 42. p. 942.

It

It was extremely rare for any one to escape from the pursuit of the secret tribunal; for the free judges, not being known, watched the moment when a prince went abroad from his palace, a gentleman from his castle, or a burger from the place of his abode, to go by night and nail to his gate the citation of the secret tribunal. If he did not appear, after this ceremony had been three times performed, he was condemned; though he was usually cited a fourth time before the execution of the sentence; after which he was delivered over to the vengeance of that invincible army of the free judges, which quitted not the pursuit till he was hunted to death.

When a free judge was not of himself strong enough to seize a criminal and hang him, he was bound not to lose sight of him, till he found a sufficient number of his comrades to enable him to execute his purpose, and these were bound to assist him, without asking any questions, on his making certain signs. They hung up the person condemned with a willow branch, instead of a rope, to the first tree in the high road, but never to a gallows. If they were obliged, by circumstances, to kill the criminal with a poniard, or in some other way, they fastened the corpse to a tree, and left their knife in it, that it might

might be known he had not been assassinated, but executed by a free judge.

All their operations were enveloped in the profoundest mystery, and even now it is unknown by what sign * the sages, as they called themselves, knew each other: still less are we acquainted with the greater part of their regulations. Though the emperor was reputed chief paramount of the order, what passed in the secret tribunal was forbidden to be revealed to him; only if he asked whether such a person had been condemned, he might be answered yes, or no. If, however, he asked the name of a person condemned, this he was not to be told. A proof of this may be seen in the answers the free counts gave the emperor Robert in 1404†.

The emperor, or the duke his representative, could make free judges nowhere but on the red soil, that is to say, in Westphalia; moreover, it must be in a free tribunal, and with the assistance of two or three free judges as witnesses. As to the

* In a writing at Herfort have been observed the following letters: S. S. G. G. These according to some signify in German: *stoc, stein, gras, grein*, in English, *stock, stone, grass, moan*." S. Plessinger, T. IV. p. 490.

† App. datt. De Pace publicâ, p. 177.

mystical meaning of the appellation red soil, it has not yet been explained. Perhaps it was given to Westphalia, because the field of the arms of Saxony was gules. The free judges were so tenacious of their rights, that, king Wincellaus having intended to create free judges in Westphalia of his own authority, when the emperor Robert asked how the real free judges were to behave to them, was answered, that they should hang them up on the spot without mercy.

The emperor alone had a right to grant protection to those who had been condemned by the secret tribunal. This was one of the reserves inserted by Charlemagne in his capitularies.

The real cause of the decline of these tribunals was the territorial sovereignty the princes gradually acquired in their states. In their endeavours to suppress an establishment independant of their authority they were so assiduous, that they finally succeeded. It has never been entirely abolished, however, by the laws of the empire, it has only been confined to its original purposes, and to certain districts. The emperor still bestows free tribunals as fiefs, and many are still to be found in the county of Mark, and in the duchy of Westphalia: but they have lost their independency, and exercise their functions only

ly in the name of the sovereign in whose territories they are established.

It appears highly probable, that the prodigious increase of power acquired by the secret tribunals at the end of the fourteenth century, and beginning of the fifteenth, was owing to the anarchy which then prevailed in the empire. Neither the chamber of Wetzlar, nor the aulic council then existed; and it was impossible for an individual to obtain justice of a prince, or of any of the states of the empire: thus the secret tribunal for some time remedied this defect in the Germanic constitution, and rendered themselves equally feared and respected.

HERMAN

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cells Sophia, daughter of John duke of
Bavaria.

That begins the manuscript which is
asked for our guide. We are in the
position in order to observe the

her circulation into the mind of those we first convey has become known to me. I have presented this circuit in

Alford, in conformity to the request
as the occasion
crip informs us the emigrants have

Mary Knoss

London

HERMAN OF UNNA:

A SERIES OF ADVENTURES

OF THE

FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

“IT was on a Monday, the Morrow
“ of all Saints, that the emperor Wincef-
“ laus conducted to his palace the prin-
“ cess Sophia, daughter of John duke of
“ Bavaria.”

Thus begins the manuscript which we take for our guide. We cite this introduction in order to observe to the reader, that our business is to copy not to invent: and having premised this circumstance, we shall convey him at once without farther circumlocution, into the midst of those scenes of festivity, of which, as the manuscript informs us, the emperor's marriage was the occasion.

Already, in conformity to the customs of the age, had three days elapsed in every
kind

kind of pleasure. The festivity, that of celebrating the marriage, was at length ushered in, and it was usual to spend it in greater sobriety.

To this it is to be ascribed, that the spirits of the emperor were joyless and depressed when he received the hand of his bride: nor was it till the approach of evening, when the ample halls of the palace of Prague began to be filled with the dancers, that he applied himself to his bottle, thence to acquire the gaiety and dissipation of thought, of which he had need in his present, so critical situation.

Indolence and love of ease had never, even in his early years, suffered him to join in the pleasures of the dance; and he resigned them now to the young men and maidens, noble and plebeian, whom the singularity of his character had induced him, without distinction, to admit to this entertainment. For himself, he retired to a corner of the hall to play with the duke of Ratibor at draughts; an amusement, it must be confessed more suitable to his dignity and age than that of dancing.

In another corner of the hall the august bride was seated, as little participating in the tumultuous joys of the Assembly as her phlegmatic husband. Her person was charming, and had all the bloom of ripening

ing youth. Educated in the solitude of a convent, she had readily left it to assume the imperial diadem; and as readily would have returned, to spend there the rest of her days, the moment she beheld him by whom it was to be placed on her head.

The emperor Wincefflaus, a prince who, though in the vigour of his years, (he was not yet forty) seemed already given up to indolence and sloth, the usual companions of old age; his countenance pale and cadaverous, his eyes dull and lifeless, unless when the circling glass gave them an appearance of animation; the emperor Wincefflaus, whose mind was as destitute of noble qualities, as his person of the graces; he whom, but for the external symbols of his station, it would have been impossible to distinguish from the meanest of his subjects—what a husband for Sophia!

It is not known whether this unfortunate princess ever felt for another that attachment, which, at the foot of the altar, and against the wish of her heart, she had just vowed to Wincefflaus. Certain however it is, that in this numerous assembly, in which she was first in beauty as in rank, there was not a man, if we except the old duke of Ratibor, the intimate friend of her husband, to whom that husband could be preferred. Judge from this circumstance, how deplorable was the situation of this
young

young maiden, whose heart, formed for tenderness, asked only to love; and who, as virtuous as innocent, regarded as criminal every reflection to which she was led by comparisons, that continually obtruded themselves to the disadvantage of her lord.

Meanwhile Sophia had been so fortunate as to find in the duke of Bavaria, what few daughters meet with in a father: a friend, the confident of her most secret thoughts. It was from affection to him, she had given her hand to Wincesslaus; which she would willingly have withheld, had she not known that her father had placed his happiness on seeing her empress. She saw no alternative, therefore, but to submit to her destiny, or destroy all the hopes of a man to whom she was sincerely attached, and become the instrument of his ruin and disgrace.

The duke of Bavaria too prudent to abandon his daughter in so distressful a moment, and unable to prevail upon her to join in the tumultuous pleasures of her nuptials, partook of her solitude in this crowded assembly, listened to her sighs and her regrets, and by the counsels of wisdom traced out the conduct it would henceforth become her to pursue.

“It is time, my daughter, and more than time,” said he to her, “to banish the gloomy train of ideas that occupy
“cupies

“cupies your mind. These comparisons
“to the disadvantage of your husband,
“this desire of not being elevated to the
“rank destined you by fortune, and of
“returning to your convent, these sighs,
“these regrets, are all too late. I shall
“always indeed be ready to listen to
“them; but at the same time I will never
“cease to remind you of the advantages
“attached to your elevation, and to which
“you seem too much inclined to shut
“your eyes.”

“Advantages, my father!” exclaimed
Sophia. “What! this crown! the title
“of empress!”

“Doubtless these are trifles,” replied
the duke. “But do you regard as equally
“insignificant, the power of promoting
“the happiness of so many nations? the
“power, perhaps, by your virtues, by that
“angelic and irresistible sweetness, which
“enchants even me, of restoring a de-
“praved prince to virtue, whom no other
“means have been able to reclaim?”

“Ah!” thought Sophia, her eyes over-
flowing with tears, “this would be attempt-
ing to transmute lead into gold.”

“Do you regard as equally insignifi-
“cant, the having paid obedience to your
“father’s will, and rendered him happy
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Sophia pressed the hand of the duke to her lips, and assured him, that this motive was her only consolation, when she reflected on the crowd of sorrows that were about to be her portion as the wife of Wincesslaus.

“ Tell me not,” said the duke, “ tell me not, my child, of sorrow. Is it possible she should be unhappy, who—”

Reader, let me stop. Thou wilt easily divine what were the arguments which this prudent father employed with his daughter. History informs us, that the venerable duke was one of the most eloquent princes of his time; and that nothing could resist the force of truth when it proceeded from his lips. Nor were his endeavours ineffectual.

Sophia became calm for the moment: and her conduct during a long and afflict-
ing marriage with a man, who could inspire her with no sentiment but aversion; her fidelity, patience, and the attentive cares she bestowed on her husband, under the misfortunes in which he was frequently plunged by his misconduct, were certainly the fruit of the lessons she received on this occasion from her father, and which were interrupted by an event, that we shall reserve for the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE night being far advanced, the dancers ceased their sport. Part of the guests seated themselves to take refreshment, and rest their wearied limbs: others, tired of the scene and intoxicated with wine, sunk in the arms of sleep. Among the latter was the august Spouse of Sophia. After a dispute with his antagonist at draughts, which according to custom, he had decided in favour of himself, a vast goblet, which he twice emptied to celebrate his victory, laid him senseless in his chair.

Sophia and her father were too deeply engaged in conversation, to think whether he were asleep or awake; and probably nothing but the scene which on a sudden broke on them, could have distracted their attention.

Silence had reigned undisturbed in the hall for the space of half an hour, when it was interrupted by the sound of harmonious instruments, approaching at a distance, and saluting the ear with tones far more grateful than the harsh and discordant ones which had animated the dancers. "What," cried Sophia, looking at her father, "do I hear?" The music continued to approach. "Celestial harmony!" added she, clasping her hands together; "as sweet,

“ as affecting as that of the nuns in the
“ choir of my convent! happy, happy days,
“ that I spent in that peaceful retreat!”

Who does not know the power of harmony, even over hearts awake to no tender sentiment? What then must have been its effect on that of Sophia! Her eyes were filled with tears, and the spectacle, that in a few moments presented itself, completed her emotion. The gates opened: a troop of young damsels appeared, and advanced with slow and measured steps to the place where Sophia was seated. They sung to the accompaniment of harps and flutes. Their song, had it been handed down to us entire, would, no doubt, have been far from exciting the applause of modern connoisseurs, for both the words and the music were adapted to the unpolished taste of the age: yet such was their effect on the empress, that her inmost soul was moved; and it was probably the first occurrence of the day that had awakened in her the least sensation of pleasure.

“ O thou!” sung the damsels, forming an ample circle round the princess,—“ who
“ hast this day exchanged thy virgin zone
“ for an imperial diadem, may happiness
“ be the result of the exchange! Thou hast
“ relinquished the title of maiden, to assume the more grateful appellation of
“ mother of thy people. Accept it then
with

“with satisfaction; accept it with joy.
“inspire our master with paternal feel-
“ings, and we will ever regard thee as the
“source of our happiness. Behold these
“flowers to which the spring gives birth,
“and which we lay at thy feet amidst
“the frosts of winter. Our hearts, and
“these ornaments, so dear to us, are the
“only presents we have to offer.”—Thus
saying, the floor round Sophia was strewed
with all the native perfumes of spring,
and the damsels kneeled at the feet of their
sovereign. While they eagerly endeavour-
ed to kiss the hem of her robe, she who
led the band, advanced with a timid air
towards the princess, and kneeling present-
ed her a coronet of flowers in a vase of gold.
The empress, in the excess of her emo-
tion, was unable to express her feelings:
she held out her hands to the damsels that
kneeled round her, and, regardless of her
rank, stooped to embrace them.

“Charming, angelic creatures!” cried
she at length. “Dearest children, with
“what emotions you fill my heart! yes
“I will be your mother: through my
“instrumentality your lord and mine shall
“become your father. But what are the
“words of your song? O repeat them
“to me again!”

They were preparing to execute her
commands, when she made a motion with

her hand and said, "I would not hear
" them sung; your music is enchanting;
" but I wish only to have the words."

The leader of the troop obeyed, and repeated what her companions had sung, with a grace and expression that gave new charms to what she delivered.

Sophia wept, and tenderly pressing the hand of the young maiden: "Yes," exclaimed she, looking at her father, "yes, " I swear to you, and to these innocent
" young women, that I will be a mother
" to them. All the affections of my heart
" shall be engrossed by my people. Patiently will I endure——"

A glance from the duke reminded her, that she was in the midst of a numerous assembly, and not alone with him.—She stopped. After a moment's silence, "What is
" your name?" said she, in the gentlest and most endearing tone, to the young damsel who had recited the words of the song.—"Ida," replied the young woman, casting down her eyes.—"Ida!" resumed Sophia. "I once knew a princess of that
" name: is it possible you can be——"

"My name is Ida Munster," said the young woman, blushing instantly like scarlet. "I am the daughter of a statutory!"

"The daughter of a——What! so
" handsome, of so noble a deportment,
so

“so—what shall I say? and the daughter only of a statuary!”

“My father is a very honest man, and a loyal subject of the emperor.”

“Wonderful girl! matchless of thy kind!”

“O no!” cried Ida, retiring a few steps, and pointing to her companions. “How many among these are my equals! how many superior to me!”

We beg to inform the reader, that Ida was mistaken in this particular. Her companions were good sort of girls, and their persons far from disagreeable: but not one of them could at all compare with her. In them every thing betrayed a want of education; every thing evinced that it was to the solemnity of the day alone they were indebted for an appearance above their station; whilst Ida, in spite of the elegance of her dress, seemed as much at her ease as the ladies of the court by whom she was surrounded, and who sought by their whispers to abash her.

Sophia took in good part the indirect lesson Ida had given her. “You are all my children, you all are equally dear to me:” cried she, stretching out her hands to the young women, who had remained on their knees. “Rise, and let me give you some token of the satisfaction I have received. Here, pretty

“blue eyes; and you my little sparkler,
“take these remembrances; and let them
“sometimes remind you of your empress,
“your mother.” Instantly she began to
disencumber herself of her magnificent
bracelets, and diamond bows, and distrib-
ute them amongst the young women, who
timidly withdrew their hands, on her offer-
ing them such valuable presents. “Take
“them, take them,” said Sophia; who
conceived that all the trappings she wore,
were her own, and was yet to learn, that
an empress had less command over her
jewels than the lowest person of her court:
“take them, my dear children, and bear
“me in your remembrance.”

restless Sophia was in an extacy, a delirium of
joy: but it was a delirium from which she
was quickly awakened by the princess of
Ratibor, governess of the household, who
whispered something in her ear. “Am
“I empress,” replied Sophia, “and not
“at liberty to dispose as I please of my
“ornaments?” Then recollecting herself:
“This at least,” added she, “is my
“own,” loosing a chain of gold from
her neck. “Take it, my dear Ida. It
“was a present from my godmother, the
“countess of Wirtemberg, and is no
“jewel of the crown.” Ida made a low
reverence, and casting her eye modestly
on herself said, “I am already more splen-
didly

“ didly adorned than becomes my station;
“ yet were it not too bold in me, while I
“ decline this gift of my sovereign, I
“ would request of her another more agreeable to my wishes.” “ Ask what you
“ will : there is nothing I can refuse you.”

“ O ! one of those beautiful ringlets
“ that flow down that bosom : what a present would it be to me ! I should deem
“ it the proudest ornament and most distinguished mark of honour ; it should
“ be -----” — “ Enthusiast !” cried Sophia, and at the same time she cut off a lock of her hair with such eagerness, that the point of the scissars scratched her neck, and tinged her handkerchief with blood.

Ida had sufficient presence of mind to be one of the first to stop the bleeding with her veil. The hall instantly resounded with the cry of the empress is wounded !” though neither the pain nor the wound was greater than the prick of a pin might have occasioned. The guests approached in crowds to witness the disaster, and the uproar that prevailed about Sophia, terrified her more than the trifle that had given rise to it. The trembling Ida and her companions were dismissed by the princess of Ratibor with the severity of a rigid governess ; and the company broke up.

CHAPTER III.

ON the arrival of the young damsels, all the company had gathered together, and even Wincesslaus was roused from his stupor of intoxication. Sophia had had a thousand witnesses, a thousand severe judges of her actions. The last incident redoubled their murmurs. Dissatisfaction was marked on the countenance of the emperor; the duke of Bavaria appeared embarrassed; and it is said, that the bride, before she retired, received a severe reprimand from the princess of Ratibor. The old lady could not forgive Sophia, for excluding her from the conversation she had had with her father. A signal from the young empress had forced her to withdraw, after in vain observing, that explicit orders were given her not to quit her majesty for a moment. The spite she had conceived against the princess, in consequence of this exclusion, manifested itself in the remonstrances she made her, respecting the conduct it became her to pursue in her new situation, and her recent behaviour to the young women. The extreme pleasure Sophia had felt from a circumstance of so trivial importance as the coronet of flowers, her familiarity with persons of no con-

condition, her conversation with Ida, her presents, and particularly the adventure of the lock of hair: were all canvassed and represented in colours so unfavourable, that Sophia herself was confounded, and carried her condescension so far as to acknowledge, that she had gone too great lengths, that she did not yet know what decorum permitted an empress to do, and that she had too much of the simplicity usually acquired in a convent, of which she would endeavour to correct herself.

Sophia was conducted to her chamber, and there compelled a second time to hear, from the mouth of her husband, the lecture she had already received from the governess of the household. The reproaches of Wincesslaus were chiefly respecting the jewels of the crown, which the empress had been so liberally distributing, but which were preserved by the interference of the princess of Ratibor. "I believe," said he to her, as he examined the jewels inclosed in their casket, "that you would have given away even your wedding ring."—"O no," replied Sophia, "I am not ignorant how necessary it is I should keep that to remind me of my duty."—Wincesslaus was too stupid to perceive the point of this reply; but the bride was alarmed at what she had said. She was afraid of being asked whether she

B 5

had

had need of such a monitor; and she hastened therefore to give another turn to the conversation. She possessed one of those gentle and benevolent hearts, which, if ever they inflict an involuntary wound, are eager to apply to it the healing balm; and soften, by obliging expressions, the poignancy of a thoughtless repartee.—

“Have not I too received a present?” said she, showing Ida’s coronet of flowers, which was placed on a table in its vase. “But no: this precious gift is not for me; I lay it at the feet of my emperor.”

Winceslaus must have been even a more contemptible being than he was, had he not been moved by the affecting air with which the charming Sophia offered him her coronet. He clasped her in his arms, called her a good girl, which was one of his tenderest expressions, and then let her go, in order to set down the gift, which in his eyes was of no value. But perceiving the golden vase, in which Ida had presented the coronet of flowers, and to which Sophia had paid little attention, he exclaimed with astonishment, “What is this?” — “It is the vase in which the flowers were presented to me,” said she. — “And this silk handkerchief?” — Sophia imagined, that it had been employed as a screen to the flowers, that the moisture of the air might not diminish their bloom.

bloom.—Wincesslaus shook his head, as he removed the handkerchief, fancying he understood this method of making presents.—“Ah,” resumed he, contemplating the vase with complacency, the weight of which assured him that it was equal to a good number of crowns: “Ah, I thought no one would have presumed to offer an empress so paltry a present as a coronet of flowers. Let us calculate the value of this vase.”

While Wincesslaus was making his calculation, Sophia withdrew to a window to hide her tears. She felt a sensation which she could not define. Her heart was so oppressed, that she was ready to faint. She opened the casement for air. “O heaven!” said she, in a low voice, and with a sigh, “grant me strength always to acquit myself with propriety of the long and painful task I have to perform. Such sentiments in an emperor! and that emperor my husband! What a being!”

“The vase,” cried Wincesslaus at last, “is worth precisely three hundred crowns. What is the name of the young woman who brought it you.”

“Ida Munster,” answered Sophia, with a voice that almost betrayed the tears she had been shedding.

“Ida Munster! very well. But come, my dear why do you remain so long exposed

“ exposed to the cold air? what! you
“ have been crying! is any thing the
“ matter with you?”

“ Alas! what can be more distressing,”
replied Sophia, clasping her hands, “ than
“ to receive presents from one’s subjects,
“ and not have the power of requiting
“ them? The trifles I distributed to those
“ kind hearted girls were taken from
“ them, while I am obliged to keep what
“ they have given me.”

“ You are mistaken; the present you
“ would have made them was incompara-
“ bly greater than that which you re-
“ ceived.”

“ And is it not thus sovereigns should
“ recompense their subjects?”

“ But the people are intended to share
“ with their emperor what they gain un-
“ der his protection.”

“ Oh! take without scruple what your
“ princes, your nobles may give you:
“ but these tradesmen, these artists, these
“ mechanics, who——”

“ I tell you again, you are mistaken.
“ Among this class of my subjects there
“ are many who are able to pay, and they
“ do so. The nobility are poor in com-
“ parison with them: labour and industry
“ procure treasures to these, which the
“ great can only acquire by plunder and
“ the spoils of an enemy.”

Win.

Wincellaus was in the right: the circumstances of the different ranks of society, were nearly as he had depicted them. But Sophia was not to be conciliated by this logic, and she continued to weep; perhaps from regret at not being able to make compensation for the present she had received, and partly, perhaps, from a prospect of the melancholy pilgrimage that lay before her.

The emperor called his valet to undress him; and Sophia's women entered to put their mistress to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

SOPHIA was not rendered so happy by her new situation as to forget, like many young married ladies, every preceding attachment and pleasure. The scene of the young damsels presenting their flowers, the only one she had found interesting during the celebration of her nuptials, had never quitted her mind. It was the last object of her thoughts as she resigned herself to sleep, and the first image that presented itself when she awoke in the morning. She sent for Ida, but Ida was

was indisposed. She sent a second time, ordering the messenger, if Ida were unable to come to court, at least to enquire the names of her companions. These, not being indisposed, repaired immediately to the empress.

The generous wife of Wincesslaus could not support the idea of receiving a present from persons of that class of her subjects which is supported by industry, without making them a return. She accompanied, therefore, her obliging thanks to the young women, with presents that could not be taken from them, as they constituted no part of the jewels of the crown, but had been the property of Sophia while she was yet unmarried.

The princess of Ratibor deemed both the presents and the thanks superfluous; and conceived that the empress compromised her dignity by the conversation she held with such plebeian simpletons. The term *simpletons*, which she employed on this occasion, was not altogether improper. In the whole company there was not a single Ida. They knew nothing beyond singing their song, and answering Sophia with awkward timidity. The empress questioned them concerning Ida, being at a loss to comprehend how this young woman had been able so far to surpass her companions, who were of the same class

as

as herself, and must consequently have received the same education. Through the answers they gave, she sometimes perceived traces of secret envy, sometimes of contempt for merit which it was impossible for them to attain. Sophia discovered, however, from their account, that Ida was an only child; that her parents were rich, and loved her tenderly; that she was too handsome, too attractive, to be loved by her companions; and that her inclination for solitude, owing to a consciousness of her superiority, or, as they termed it, her pride, seldom permitted her to mix in the circle, in which she had performed the day before so brilliant a part.

The many commendations bestowed on these young women by the empress, would have been more than sufficient to procure them the admiration of the whole court, had not Ida so far outshone them, that her name was repeated from every mouth, and her idea alone occupied the attention of every mind. The young courtiers had not forgotten the inexpressible grace with which she presented herself. They enquired into the minutest circumstances respecting her; besieged her father's house; asked where she was to be seen; were astonished at not meeting her any where, and pitied her for not being born to a more elevated rank. Among them, however,
was

was one, the young Herman of Unna, a gentleman of Westphalia, whose conduct was the reverse of all this. He never pronounced her name, asked no questions concerning her, and neither pitied nor admired her in public: but, filled with her idea, he thought of her incessantly in private, and had discovered the church, to which she regularly repaired to hear mass, before his comrades had gone through half their researches.

Herman was only eighteen years of age. Admitted early to the court of Winceflaus, which was far from being the best possible school, his principles upon the chapter of love, his virtue and his morals, could not be supposed very strict; and of course he regarded his inclination for a girl, whom, from disparity of rank, he could never think of marrying, as a matter of trivial importance. A favourite and confident of the emperor, in whose service he had been, almost from infancy, in quality of page, he had frequently been his agent in a variety of intrigues; which prove Winceflaus to have had little delicacy in affairs of love, and that he could make himself happy without scrutinizing matters too nicely. Thus circumstanced, when was Herman to have imbibed sentiments suitable to his birth and the virtue of Ida? It must be acknowledged, however, in his favour,

favour, that he had formed no criminal designs : he suffered himself to be led on by his passion, without once looking forward to its consequences.

Notwithstanding every attempt of our young courtier, he could not gain access to the house of old Munster. His door was open to those only who had business with him ; and he had too much penetration to be the dupe of artifice. Herman was obliged therefore to content himself with the pleasure of seeing the object of his attachment at the church to which she went daily to offer up her orisons ; but her devotion was too sincere, her attention too profound, for a single glance to stray towards her admirer. Beside, she seldom appeared at church without a large thick veil, not put on to attract the eyes of gazers, rather than screen the countenance from observation ; for it was as coarse and unadorned as the veil of a common mechanic's daughter.

It was only on Sundays, when her father went to church in his best suit of clothes, and with a sword by his side, that she appeared with her face unveiled, walking by her mother. A new light then seemed to Herman diffused through the aisle, though it was a light that shone not for him. What would he not have given for one of those looks, so tender and so devout,

devout, that were directed sometimes to St. Ursula, and sometimes to the Virgin!

The name of Ida, which had been so often repeated at court the week after All-hallows, was soon so completely forgotten, that scarcely was it remembered at Christmas. Sophia herself had ceased to recall her image. The attachment she had felt for her, was doubtless too vivid to be lasting. Ida, besides, had taken no steps to keep it alive. After the first marks of esteem she had received from the empress, she no more appeared at court to solicit new ones; and probably had she not been guilty of that omission, those testimonies of affection would insensibly have diminished. Sophia was a woman, and a princess. Her partiality for Ida was, at bottom, nothing more than the sentiment felt by a young person, yet new to the world, towards those who relieve her from the languor of a wearisome circle, and excite sensations of pleasure in her breast, where only chagrin existed before.

Independently of all this, new subjects of reflection daily presented themselves to the mind of Sophia, and entirely occupied her thoughts. Every day discovered to her some new imperfection of her husband, gave her fresh light respecting her unfortunate situation, or brought her acquainted with persons who rendered that

that situation still more painful. Shortly after her marriage, a lady appeared at court, and was presented to her under the name of Madam von Baden. To Sophia her manners appeared so vulgar, that she would have paid no further attention to her, had she not found her at supper seated by the side of the emperor, and remarked, from their familiarity, that they had long been acquainted.

Sophia had been brought up in a convent in total ignorance of the occurrences of the times. The adventures of Winceflaus with the fair maid of Baden, were known to every body but her. Become empress, no one was so officious as to acquaint her with the frailties of her husband; and it had been otherwise, she would probably have had the goodness to place to the account of the past, his still subsisting attachment to Susanna.

Besides, to see madam von Baden was sufficient. Her air was indolent and heavy; her look bold and immodest; her cheeks crimson; and her bloated face could boast no other charm than a tolerably fine set of teeth. That such a woman should captivate an emperor, and that emperor the spouse of Sophia, appeared an utter impossibility.

Winceflaus himself took the trouble, during supper, to recite his adventures with

with Susanna, omitting however some few particulars; and Sophia saw in his attentions to that lady, nothing more than ill-timed or excessive proofs of gratitude, which she did not fail to interpret with her usual indulgence. The commendations which the emperor bestowed on madam von Baden, induced even Sophia to show her some esteem. Soon, however, she was made acquainted with the foolish amours of Winceslaus, and she was then first convinced, that to all her other troubles must be added that of having a rival, and a rival too so unworthy of her. She frequently wept in secret; and the prince of Ratibor once surprising her in tears, seized that opportunity of gaining her confidence, which she had before attempted in vain.

Sophia thought she could not deposit her griefs in the bosom of a person attached to her more sincerely. The sole confident of her most secret thoughts, her father, to whom her husband had hinted, in a manner far from equivocal, a desire of his absence, had quitted Prague a few days after the marriage; and his unhappy daughter was thus left, without resource, to the guidance of her own discretion. For the first time in her life Sophia embraced the governess of the household; and though this lady seemed to employ herself only in giving

giving her disagreeable information respecting the cause of her chagrin, yet she found a sort of consolation in speaking of her misfortunes, and giving free vent to her complaints, and to the contempt she felt for so unworthy a husband.

From this moment the princess of Rati-bor began to assume despotic authority over the empress. She exalted or depressed whom she pleased; prescribed to Sophia what objects to love and what to hate; and, as Ida was forgotten at court, it would not have been allowable to revive the remembrance of her, had even the empress desired it.

CHAPTER V.

HERMAN, meanwhile, never ceased to think of his beloved Ida. The difficulty he found in speaking to her, or obtaining a single look, inflamed him the more, and exalted her in his eyes. Her obscure birth which at first had been a matter of so total indifference, now began to disquiet him. He wished either to raise her to his own rank, or reduce himself to a level with hers. To effect this, a thousand romantic expedients occurred to his mind: for though romances did not then exist, the
heads

heads of young persons were not less fertile in imagining extraordinary adventures, which amused them as much as books of this stamp amuse our contemporaries.

To elevate Ida to an equality with himself, to address her with honourable designs, and to make her his wife, appeared to Herman impossible. The consent of the emperor to an unequal match might probably be obtained; for on that head, as on many others, he was extremely indulgent: but Herman had relations who were not so indifferent. He was poor, and the place of chamberlain, which he had filled with distinction for six months, was far from lucrative. It is true the parents of Ida were rich; nevertheless, all things considered, Herman began to be of opinion, that he should find the second road to happiness the most easy. He resolved therefore to reduce himself to a level with her; and to sacrifice to his love, rank, family, and all his future hopes of preferment.

It is not known what steps he took to obtain this end. He probably attempted to gain admission into old Munster's house as an apprentice: but whether the crafty statuary recollected the figure he had so often seen in different disguises, or whether he had other reasons to be on his guard,

guard, it appears that Herman failed in his scheme; for our manuscript represents him, shortly after the period in which he must have made these attempts, in as hopeless a situation as at the commencement of his amour.

We have observed, that Herman was the favorite and confidant of Winceßlaus. Pale and dejected, he was more officious than ever in attending his master; and all his looks seemed to express the desire he felt of being asked the cause of his despondency, and receiving proffers of assistance. But Winceßlaus said not a word. He resembled not those princes who are always ready to gratify the wishes of their favorites; on the contrary, he possessed one of those cold and insensible minds, which receive from those around them but slight and fugitive impressions. One might have been tortured before his eyes without his betraying any emotion; have died without his perceiving it; and returned to life again without his expressing any astonishment.

This frigid indifference to the love-sick torments of a chamberlain of eighteen, will probably be thought of little importance, though to him, whom it concerned, it doubtless appeared otherwise.—But to go on with our story.

Herman

Herman was of the number of those fortunate mortals, who frequently owe to some unexpected event, the accomplishment of their dearest wishes. To the languishing looks of our hero, the emperor paid no attention, and understood nothing of their meaning. Meanwhile, regardless and ignorant as he was of them, he resolved to employ his young confidant in a business as auspicious to his views as Herman himself could have desired.

"Herman," said he to him one day, "what am I to think of thee? Art thou blind, or dost thou wish not to see the chagrin of thy master? Why dost thou not ask what disturbs my repose?"

Herman bowed, without answering; for what indeed could he have said? How was it possible to discover in features, like those of Winceßlaus, traces of sorrow, or of any other sentiment? How conjecture inward trouble from the countenance of a person whose manners were at best neither mild nor engaging? The reproach of the emperor was supremely unjust, and silence was the only answer that could be given it.

"Yes, Herman," continued Winceßlaus, "I am in the greatest embarrassment; and as you have extricated me from difficulties on so many former occasions,

“cassions, I am disposed to think you may serve me on this.”

Again Herman bowed, and felt a secret satisfaction from the words of the emperor, as they recalled to his memory certain adventures in which he had been the principal actor, and even kindled in his heart a vague kind of hope of speedily attaining his purpose.

“I am in the greatest want of money,” resumed the emperor. The dower of my wife has been all swallowed up by the expences of the nuptials. You know I was not sparing. Forty thousand florins were a good round sum, and required me to be generous. Well, they are gone; and with them have I obtained an insupportable censor of my conduct. This is what I have left; while that alone which rendered her person desirable is vanished for ever.”

The heart of Herman revolted at this language. He had long indeed witnessed the imprudent prodigality of his master, as well as his blindness to the knavery of those by whom he was surrounded: but forty thousand florins, the whole dower of a princess considered as rich, and which were equal to the portion which the king of England had lately given with his daughter, to the great satisfaction of his son-in-law—the dissipation of such a sum

confounded all the ideas of Herman ; and had not the emperor named madam von Baden, to whom he ascribed a part of this extraordinary expence, it would not have been possible for our young chamberlain to have unriddled the mystery.

Herman was not unacquainted with the character of Susanna. He had heard of her rage at the marriage of Wincesslaus ; he knew that she had been daring enough to threaten her paramour with discovering certain circumstances to Sophia and her father, that would infallibly have broken off the match ; and it required therefore little penetration to guess, that her silence had been purchased by large sums of money, which the emperor ingeniously carried to the account of the necessary expences of the nuptials.

“ What is to be done ? ” continued Wincesslaus. Do not suppose I am poor, “ because my coffers are empty. In those “ of my subjects there is money enough, “ and the only question is to devise how “ to convey it into mine. Old Munster, “ for example, who, on the day of my “ wedding, made so handsome a present “ to my wife, is certainly rich. I am told “ that he can give his daughter a portion “ equal to the sum I received with the “ princess of Bavaria. You see, from “ this, that he is able, and of course it

“ is

“ is his duty to assist me. Go to him in
“ my name, and ask him to lend me a
“ thousand crowns. A prince is never
“ without resources for discharging his
“ debts; and I empower you to grant him
“ permission on the spot, to wear on Sun-
“ days, like the nobility, a gold chain
“ round his neck; a permission which
“ many other artists have long solicited
“ in vain.”

Herman was thunderstruck. Joy at having at last found a pretext to enter the dwelling of Ida, to speak to her father on behalf of the emperor, to offer him a mark of honour, that would so greatly distinguish him from others of his station, absorbed all his thoughts; and it was not till he arrived at Munster's door, that he began to be uneasy respecting the manner in which his proposals might be received, and to reflect on the inconveniences attached to this mark of the emperor's confidence. He feared that this embassy, if successful, would be often repeated; and that it might not merely diminish the wealth of a family become so dear to him, but in time reduce Ida and her father to poverty and wretchedness.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE reflections of this nature were rapidly passing in the mind of our youth, he had already knocked twice at Munster's door. It was opened by an old domestic. The figure of Herman was of the class of those to which the father of Ida had forbidden access to his house. Young, handsome, and elegantly dressed, his appearance was by no means calculated to obtain a favourable reception from a man, who, in his master's absence, considered himself as the guardian of his honour. Besides, this trusty domestic imagined that he had already seen his face, and shown him the door, on some former occasion; which was far from being unlikely considering the various attempts Herman had made to introduce himself.

The door therefore was shut in his face without ceremony; and before our hero had time to mention whom he wanted, a surly voice exclaimed, that his master was gone out.—“But his wife,” said the young courtier, in a gentle and soothing accent, “is she at home?—The answer would probably have been the same, had not the question reached Ida's mother, whom chance had luckily brought within hearing.

Herman

Herman heard through the door, a slight altercation between the wife and the servant. He knocked again: when she obliged the merciless porter to withdraw, and she herself opened the door. The appearance of our hero drew from her a profound courtesy. "May I beg the favor of your name, sir knight?" said she, with an air of embarrassment, and blushing.

"My name is of little consequence," answered Herman with impatience; "but the embassy with which I am charged gives me a title to admission every where: I come on the part of the emperor."—"Of the emperor! cried she: "I hope not to bring us ill news; for, thank God, I know not that we have any thing of which to accuse ourselves; and as to what money can purchase. . . But have the goodness to walk in; I will just see where my daughter is, and wait upon you in a moment."

Herman was conducted into a parlour, where the first object that met his eyes was a beautiful young woman whom he would instantly have taken for Ida, had she not appeared a thousand times more charming: he was soon however convinced that it was Ida herself.

Our young lover had never seen the object of his passion but with the thick veil she wore at church, or in a very unbecom-

coming dress, which was then in fashion. The high stiff collar, the enormous folds of the gown, and the ancient gothic head-dress, left indeed this beautiful young woman charms enough easily to be distinguished from her companions, disguised in the same manner; but how different did she appear in her undress, with no other ornament than a slight veil fastened to her lovely tresses!

Herman stood motionless as a statue; and Ida, occupied at her spinning-wheel, scarcely raised her eyes. In those days, it was customary for young women to put some restraint upon their looks, and to repress the eager stare of curiosity.

At his entrance, the mother had requested our hero to sit down, and expressed a hope that he would not be tired with waiting. But, so near his Ida, it was impossible for him to feel any sensation of weariness. Intoxicated with the pleasure of beholding her, he thought not of changing his posture, and he stood nailed as it were to the floor, with his eyes fixed on the lovely spinster. Once or twice she opened her lips to remind the young man of her mother's request, but instantly closed them again, doubting whether it would not be a breach of decorum to address herself to a stranger.

The behaviour of Herman was equally extraordinary. The charming spinster let fall

fall her distaff: and our hero, instead of running with eagerness to take it up, and availing himself of the opportunity it afforded of approaching and speaking to the object of his affection, suffered her to stoop for it herself without making the least movement to her assistance.

Ida, to whom this trifling accident had not happened from coquetry, blushed with shame, and resumed her spinning with fresh eagerness, careful to avoid all seeming reproach of the stranger for his want of address. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to say whether, had the same event been repeated, it would, after the failure of the first opportunity, have been successful in bringing about a conversation between the lover and his mistress. Be this as it may, an insurmountable obstacle was put to it by the question which the mother who entered at this moment, addressed to Herman.

“And what intelligence from the emperor does his envoy bring us?” said she, again pressing Herman to be seated, while she remained herself modestly standing before him. The chamberlain was a little embarrassed; he even blushed, a quality at present rare among courtiers, and found it no easy matter to execute with propriety the commission with which he was honored. Nor does our manuscript relate the manner in which he acquitted

quitted himself; it only mentions the effect it produced on Mrs. Munster, who smiled; and, giving a significant nod to Ida, observed: "Now, daughter, my dream is out. In your father's absence, I thought I found roses in our garden; now roses signify honors."

Thus saying, she went to a large chest, which she opened with some noise, and took out of it a small ebony casket. "I am highly delighted," said she, seating herself by the side of Herman, and emptying the casket on the table, "that my husband is not at home, to deprive me of the honour of rendering a service to so great a personage. Here, sir knight, take what you please, take all without counting it, except this chain indeed, and this ring, which belong to my daughter. Assure our emperor of my profound respect, and tell him that we love him with all our hearts since he has given us so good an empress. We hope that through her, things will be better than they have been."

Herman was surprized at the readiness with which this woman sacrificed, what he conceived to be all her wealth, to a sovereign like Winceflaus. He looked at her with astonishment; said a few words to assure her that the sum, whatever it was, should be faithfully repaid, though he believed

lieved no such thing; and then spoke of the favour which the emperor had authorised him to bestow on Munster, as a recompense (or as was most likely, a compensation and acquittal for the loan.) "But who," added Herman, "has the greatest right to wear the gold chain? he, for whom it was intended by the emperor, or the generous woman who has displayed such a readiness to serve him?"

"My husband is not vain enough for that," answered Mrs. Munster with a smile; "and, I should certainly make a charming figure among the females of my station, decorated with such an ornament! Be that however as it may, if the emperor should be disposed to recompense me, I mean, upon a proper occasion, to ask him a favor of another kind, which I hope he will not refuse me."

Herman assured her, that he would obtain for her from the emperor whatever she desired, and that he believed he might authorize her, without detriment to the favour which she intended to ask, to wear at present in public any ornament she pleased.

Our young man, who transferred to the mother a portion of the sentiments which he felt for the daughter, spoke with such warmth, that the smile of self-complacency was again lighted up in the countenance of Mrs. Munster. "I am hap-

“py,” said she, “to find that you have
“such influence with your master, and I
“thank him for the permission he gives
“me to use my own jewels, which I may
“now, at any rate, wear in my house,
“should I feel so disposed. But as you
“are so much in favour with the emper-
“ror, how is it he does not permit you
“to wear a gold chain? I have seen you,
“I think, at church, and other places,
“but never with this badge of honor;
“and yet you are a nobleman.” Herman
blushed—The narrowness of his fortune,
and the mean parsimony of Winceflaus, he
well knew to be the cause of this omission.

“What,” continued she, “would you
“say, were I for once to act the emperor,
“and decorate you with a chain? Ida,
“will you give your consent?” The mo-
ther, as she said this, held up a chain,
which she had just before declared to be
her daughter’s. Ida made a sign of ap-
probation. “Come hither then,” resumed
the mother, “and with your own hands
“place about his neck the present which
“I make him at your expense.”

Ida was confused. She rose however,
at length, upon a second summons of her
mother, with trepidation approached our
hero, took the chain, put it about his neck,
and returned hastily to her distaff with-
out scarcely looking at Herman, while he,
almost beside himself, gazed on her with
rapture,

rapture, and would have caught her in his arms.

A long silence ensued. Ida sat at her reel, with her eyes fixed upon it, but without resuming her occupation: Herman regarded her with tenderness unutterable: and the wife of Munster, sitting in a chair behind them, observed them both with attention.

This dumb scene was at length put an end to, by the latter asking our youth, if he was not the chevalier Herman of Unna. Herman was about to answer in the affirmative, and to ask by what means she had come to the knowledge of his name, when Mrs. Munster, hearing her husband's footstep in the porch, requested him to conceal Ida's present in his pocket. He obeyed, without asking the reason, and Munster made his appearance. He was a good-looking old man, and as decently dressed as his station permitted. A loftiness of carriage announced the independent citizen, who considered himself as equal to any of the nobility; but such goodness beamed from every feature of his countenance, that it was impossible not to pardon in him so slight a failing. The presence of the chamberlain excited his surprise. He looked with severity at his wife, ordered Ida to withdraw, and then asked Herman, what he wanted.

The name of the emperor softened a little

little his features, and the commission with which the envoy was charged caused him to smile. "I am charmed," said he, as soon as he was informed of what had passed, the present of Ida excepted—"I am charmed that my wife has acted precisely as I should have done myself.—The next time the emperor has occasion for me, and it will not, I trust, be long first, it will then be my turn. We are bound to sacrifice to our sovereign both our fortunes and our lives. In one of the loyal cities of his majesty I found assistance and protection when I was poor and persecuted. It is in his dominions I have gained a portion of what I possess: and he has a right to share it with me. On the part of your master, therefore, you may come, young man, as often as he shall desire you; but, on your own account, never."

After such a declaration Herman was desirous of prolonging the conference: but the answers he received were brief. He spoke of renewing his visit, and added some compliments to Munster: but the old man was silent. Herman then retired. What indeed would it have availed him to have staid? She, who so powerfully attracted him, his dear Ida, was withdrawn; and her mother, before so complaisant, was so changed, since the arrival of her husband,

band, as not to be known for the same person.

Our hero, with slow and pensive steps, returned to the palace, revolving, as he went, every event that had passed. Ida's looks, the mother's kindness, the present she had in so flattering a manner bestowed upon him by the hand of her daughter, and a thousand things beside, occupied his thoughts, enchanted him with hopes of which he examined not the solidity, and made him forget his chief business and the success with which it had been attended: nor was it till he felt the burthen of the money which the good old lady had given him, a burthen which in the first moments of his joy he had not perceived, that he recollected what he had to do, and hastened to impart to his master the event of his commission.

It was a law with Winceslaus never to be satisfied; and he departed not from it on the present occasion. The present which the generous citizen had made him fell a few crowns short of the sum he had requested. In his eyes the wealth of Munster appeared inexhaustible, and he talked of having shortly a second recourse to it.

His confidant paid little attention to what he said. He wished to be alone, that he might again reflect on his adventure, and contemplate at leisure the chain he had received: a jewel of no inconsiderable

considerable value, and with which he was in every respect satisfied, except that the medallion attached to it, instead of representing the charming features of Ida, exhibited the bearded visage of an old count of Wirtemberg, respecting whom he had little curiosity.

While Herman gave a loose to his reflections, and recalled to his mind the beauty of Ida and the kindness of her mother, he must certainly have forgotten the severity of the father; for, the next morning, as soon as it was light, he repaired to the house of old Munster, and was surprized at not finding admittance. He was told that neither the master nor the mistress was at home; that it was to be presumed, after so recent an application, he had no commands from the emperor; and that he could have no other business there.

It was to no purpose that he persevered in his visits, he was always dismissed in a similar manner, and he began at last to wish that the emperor might again have need of money, and might apply, as before, to the strong box of Munster. But Winecellaus had too much cunning not to have discovered other more copious sources from which to supply his wants. He created earls, counts, princes, exacting from each a sum proportionate to the dignity conferred. He also invented a new way of

enriching himself by the appointment of free-judges, and other officers, of that dreadful tribunal, by the terrible arm of which justice was then administered in secret. It is true the emperor had no right to such nominations, the privilege belonging exclusively to Westphalia, where those tribunals were in force. But Winceflaus was a man little given to scrutinise things too narrowly; he took what did not belong to him, as if it had been his own, and felicitated himself on the advantages to be derived from it.

CHAPTER VII.

A SECRET enmity subsisted between count Victor of Milan and a prince of the house of Visconti. The cause of their misunderstanding, and the motives that prompted them to reciprocal injuries, are foreign to our history. Ambition however and a thirst of vengeance brought the former to the court of Winceflaus, to whom he offered a hundred thousand florins †, (an enormous sum in those days,) if the emperor would raise him to the dignity of a duke. Winceflaus, deaf to the remonstrances of the princes of the em-

† Eleven thousand two hundred and fifty Pounds.

pire, who would have dissuaded him from compliance, listened only to his interest; and granted to the count, in spite of the laws, which were formally against it, not only the favor which he publicly solicited, but another, as the event proved, which he had demanded in private, namely, the establishment in his territories of a secret tribunal. This was authorising him to arm, on the slightest pretext, against any one who offended him, a thousand executioners, who might put the unhappy person to death, wherever they met him, without any one daring to take vengeance of the deed.

This last motive of the count's visit is not sufficiently known for us to speak positively respecting it; but it is certain that he obtained all he asked, and paid the emperor for his complaisance even more generously than he had promised.

Wincellaus now imagined himself in possession of inexhaustible mines of wealth. Nothing was thought of at Prague but scenes of dissipation. The most licentious entertainments, of which the preferment of the duke of Milan was the pretext and the support, rapidly succeeded each other. The people, while they murmured at the follies of the emperor, had the greater folly to imitate him. His extravagance gave a temporary circulation to money, and the pleasures with which his courtiers
were

were intoxicated, found their way to the most distant corners of the city.

It was about this time, that a dreadful fire, of which some ancient chronicles still speak, broke out in the eastern quarter of Prague. The clock had just struck twelve. The emperor, and his inseparable companion, the prince of Ratibor, were emptying their capacious bumpers, which were to divest them of the little reason that remained, while around them lay, dead drunk on the floor, all who had dared enter the list with such noble antagonists. Stammering, and bursting with laughter, they descanted on the manner in which their companions had fallen. They then disputed about the order in which it had happened, and the time they could themselves hold out, so warmly as to be on the point of coming to blows.

During these riotous proceedings, the younger part of the company, who, though least in number, were by far the most interesting, had drank out of no cup but the cup of pleasure, and were amusing themselves with the noble exercise of dancing. In the midst of this brilliant circle was Herman; but he partook not of its joy, for Ida was not there. Sometimes he went to the window which looked towards that part of the city in which she resided; then again he would hastily retire, renewing

ing the oath, which he had already a thousand times broken, to think of her no more. At length he joined the dance, as the only way of dissipating his chagrin. Though delicacy had prevented him from becoming inebriated, yet had he drank enough to give him a momentary elevation of spirits; and his imagination led him in turns to see the idol of his heart in every nymph with whom he lightly tripped round the hall.

On a sudden extraordinary cries were heard, which spread trouble and confusion through this joyous assembly. "It is the centinel," said a pretty blue-eyed girl to Herman, pressing his arm, which she held to her heart: "it is the centinel, announcing the approach of day; let us not spend in vain the precious moments that are on the wing." The cries being repeated, a stop was put to the music. The company listened. "It is fire!" exclaimed a hundred voices at once. The dancers instantly crowded together, and as quickly separated, running, some to the doors, others to the windows: to discover where the accident was, or fly from a danger of which they were ignorant.

Herman flew to the window from which he had so little absented himself during the evening. All the eastern part of the sky was as a sea of fire. The remembrance of

Ida,

Ida rushed instantly to his mind, and dissipated in a moment the kind of intoxication in which he was plunged. Invoking her name, he abruptly quitted the hand of his partner, which he had hitherto held; and, almost beside himself, endeavoured, by incredible exertions, to pierce through the crowd which prevented him from getting out of the apartment. This he effected, by throwing down every one that opposed his passage, and having at length gained the street, he ran with the wildness of insanity, regardless of the distance, till he arrived at the scene of devastation. There But the reader will spare me the recital of the dreadful and wide-spreading ruin to which Herman would have been witness, had he been susceptible of any other idea than that of the peril of his mistress.

The inhabitants of that part of the city where the conflagration had taken place, were probably late informed of their danger; for many of them, who had been celebrating the festival of Wincesslaus, were overcome with intoxication, and others, exhausted by their daily labour, were as profoundly sunk in sleep.

In the number of the latter was the family of Munster. They were strangers to the impure pleasures of dissipation. On the contrary their days were employed in industry, and their nights in repose. The event,

event, beside, had happened on the eve of *the* exaltation of the cross; and to spend such a night in pleasure, would have appeared highly criminal to a family so religious.

Herman, half dead with apprehension, found Munster and his wife, with folded arms, gazing at their house, which was in flames, and calling incessantly on their dear Ida, it was with difficulty these unfortunate parents had saved their own lives. The father, who, after his escape, had returned through the fire in order to rescue his daughter, whom he sought in vain in the apartment where she had been accustomed to sleep, felt, so great was his anxiety, no pain from his arm, which had been scorched in the attempt; and the mother seemed every moment ready to rush into the flames to save her beloved child, or perish with her.

"Ida!" exclaimed the frantic Herman, "is Ida then missing? Oh! let me seek, let me save her!" Thus saying, he seized a ladder, and placed it against that part of the house which the mother pointed out. The wind having for an instant blown away the flames from it, he mounted on burning beams and heated stones, and reached the chamber of his mistress. A thick smoke enveloped and concealed him from every eye. The parents of Ida could

could no longer distinguish the deliverer of their daughter. "Ah! it is over with him too!" exclaimed the mother, wringing her hands. But, in a moment he appeared again, penetrated still farther into the fatal ruins, disappeared a second time, again came in sight, descended the ladder, and fell senseless into the arms of those who hastened to his assistance.

"Ah! he is returned without her!" cried the distracted mother, running towards him; "he is returned without her! O God, where is my child?"

While the mother thus bewailed the loss of Ida, the father was endeavouring to revive the intrepid youth, who had so generously and so unsuccessfully hazarded his life for her. While traversing the house in search of his beloved, the smoke had nearly suffocated him: anxiety also, and the efforts he had made, had totally exhausted his strength, so that his fainting assumed the very image of death, and nothing but the torture occasioned by his wounds could have recalled him to life.

Day began to break; the crowd encreased; the drunkards, and weary artisans of Prague had been roused, and methods were at length taken to put a stop to the conflagration.

The parents of Ida quitted the melancholy spot, which they supposed to be the grave

grave of all their felicity, in order to retire to a small house, belonging to them, which the flames had not reached. At their entreaty, the unfortunate Herman directed his servants to convey him to the same place; the mother having declared that no one but herself should have the care of him.

Scarcely had they gotten half-way, when a young woman rushed from the crowd, and threw herself into their arms. It was Ida.

To describe the impression that was made upon these three unhappy beings, by her sudden appearance is, impossible. Her lover and mother fainted away. The father alone had sufficient presence of mind to ask her by what strange miracle she had been saved.

"Saved!" answered Ida, "I have never been in danger. God be praised that you are safe. It was but a few moments ago that I heard of the fire, when I instantly ran to assist you, or perish with you in the flames."

The father now for the first time recollected, that the evening before, Ida had begged leave to go with their servant to a distant church, dedicated to the Virgin, to hear mattins, which were to begin at midnight, and last till break of day. It was there this excellent young woman first heard

heard the news of the calamity of her parents. Her good angel, who watched over her safety, had reserved her for the consolation of others, and decreed that she should taste, in the very lap of misfortune, a happiness which she was far from expecting.

Herman being recovered from his swoon, Ida was presented to him. She thanked him in terms of the liveliest gratitude. She did more; she became his nurse, and bestowed upon him the tenderest care, which contributed not a little to feed the flame of love in the heart of one, and to kindle it in that of the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

AS soon as Herman was cured, decency obliged him to quit the house of Munster. He accordingly returned to the palace; but Wincesslaus expressed little or no concern for him, and was even so unfeeling as to make his adventure the subject of ribaldry. The courtiers imitated the example of their master, and the amours of Herman and Ida were for several days the standing jest of the court. Sophia alone was generous enough not to banter the young chevalier, or utter a single pleasantry
on

on the dangers he had so gallantly braved. Neither the reflections that had occupied her mind, nor the endeavours of the princess of Ratibor, had been able wholly to stifle the lively inclination with which Ida had at first inspired her heart. She could not hear of the calamity that had befallen the parents without emotion; she rejoiced that their excellent daughter had been so providentially saved; and she commissioned Herman to deliver, in her name, to the unfortunate family, a present, which considering the little Sophia had in her power, was far from being trifling. Herman was transported to find the secret wishes of his heart thus agreeably accomplished. The diminution of Ida's happiness, in consequence of the loss her father had sustained by the fire, hung heavy on his mind. He contemplated with sorrow the chain of gold he had received from her in happier days, and thought it incumbent on him to return it; but, of such a sacrifice, he found himself incapable, and he chose rather to divest himself of all he had that was valuable, though that indeed was little, in order to make the best compensation in his power. He added therefore to the present of the empress some jewels of his own; sure, under that respected name, of their being received. Our youth had, independently of this, another project for the relief of this
good

good family. He remembered the sum that had been lent by Mrs. Munster; he knew that the emperor had not spent the whole of what he had received from the duke of Milan, and he ventured to hint to him the repayment of what he had borrowed. This freedom was taken amiss, and was apparently the first cause of the emperor's coolness towards his favourite.

"Have you been desired," said Winceflaus, with an air of discontent, "to remind me of this trifle?"—"No," replied Herman, "On the contrary, I have reason to believe that the generous wife of Munster intended it as a present not as a loan. But such disinterestedness, is it not an additional motive...?" The emperor interrupted him. "Did you not mention," said he, "some favour which this woman talked of asking?" Hermann bowed assent. "Well," continued the emperor, "let us wait till we know what it is; and I give my word of honour that I will not..." refuse, he was going to say; but the fear of pledging himself for something he might not chuse to perform, induced him to break off the conversation, and a sign of impatience which he made with his hand, obliged the young chamberlaine to withdraw.

Herman took his way towards the hum-

ble habitation of Munster, regretting, as he went, that he had not been able to increase the present of Sophia as much as he wished. Had he been emperor, no sum would have appeared to him too great, to recompense the kindness of this honest citizen's wife.

He found the father of Ida alone. He was uneasy that what he had to offer him was not more considerable? meanwhile he presented it in the name of Sophia. Munster hung down his head with an air of pensiveness, and his eyes overflowed with tears. "How generous, how noble a creature!" cried he at last: "the true mother of her people! What she now does for me, she is doing every day for a thousand of her unfortunate subjects. She deprives herself of the little which the parsimony of Wincesslaus allows her, to relieve the wants of others. What pity, that her influence over our master is not so great as was expected! And yet our burthens are in many respects lightened, and the people feel towards him less hatred since he has given them such an angel for their mistress.

The heart of Herman was still full of bitterness against the emperor, and he could not avoid reciting to Munster the conversation he had just had with him. "You were wrong," said the old man

"Whoever

“Whoever lends to Winceflaus, never
“dreams of being repaid: and as to the
“favour my wife may have to ask, I beg
“you will not interfere in it. Women
“have often strange whims in their heads:
“and should my wife ask any thing of the
“emperor, which, being attended with no
“expence to him, he may therefore not
“refuse, it is possible that the favour,
“when obtained, may prove more detri-
“mental than advantageous.”

To the latter part of this discourse,
Herman made no reply; but he swore not
to rest till the sum borrowed by the empe-
ror was repaid. “I consider myself,” ad-
ded he, “as your debtor. Would it were
“in my power to act up to my wishes!
“O heaven! grant me but a part, a small
“part of the wealth, which thou hast per-
“haps one day destined for me, and I
“will cheerfully renounce the rest! En-
“able me to”

“Young man,” interrupted Munster,
assuming a serious countenance, “you
“give yourself too much concern about
“this business; and to calm a little your
“agitation, I will disclose to you a secret,
“with which even my wife and daughter
“are not fully acquainted. I am not so
“poor as you may imagine; as I was less
“rich than the world believed me. I
“knew the reports spread respecting my

“ wealth by my enemies ; and had long
“ expected, on the part of the emperor,
“ some attempt to make himself master
“ of it. I would have obliged him with
“ pleasure ; I would have granted him
“ whatever he should have asked, as long
“ as it had been possible to satisfy his rapaciousness, without ruin to myself. But
“ had my situation become critical, I should
“ have considered what steps I had to take.
“ Princes first begin with borrowing, and
“ end at last with plundering. I know
“ what has happened to others. It is easy
“ to find pretexts for stripping an honest
“ man of his property. If then I had
“ suspected any such disaster approaching,
“ I would have collected what I have buried in this house, and have fled with
“ my family. My larger house, which
“ is burnt, and which I can rebuild if I
“ please, though I have no such intention,
“ Wincesslaus might, in that case, have
“ kept, to indemnify himself for the loss
“ of a good and loyal subject.”

Herman listened with the utmost surprise to the old man, who thus continued his recital. “ My wife, indeed, knows I have
“ buried some money here, but she is ignorant of the sum. A woman is always
“ a woman ; that is to say, a being vain
“ and presumptuous when fortune smiles,
“ timid and humble when she frowns.”

"But Ida?" interrupted the young man, vexed at these injurious complaints against the sex, and in which his mistress seemed to be involved.

"As to Ida, she is out of the question," replied Munster, who, at the mention of her name, seemed to fall into a profound revery. After a moments silence, "since we are speaking of her," resumed he, "I must beg you not to take it amiss, if you should in future see her less frequently, or rather not at all. I know that you love her; you have given the noblest proof of it; but . . . you must not think of her . . . indeed you must not . . . And you will not, I hope, require what it is impossible for me to grant."

Herman echoed the word *impossible*, in a tone expressive of the despair into which he was thrown by a declaration that obliged him to renounce an union on which depended the happiness of his life. Though he had hitherto not known himself what hopes he could or ought to entertain; yet still had he continued to hope, and he trembled when he perceived a stroke aimed at the fragile edifice which his imagination had fondly erected in some obscure and uncertain futurity.

The old man strenuously combated the passion of our youth, who no less strenuously defended it. He was ready, he said, to sacrifice to Ida his birth, his situation, and all his future hopes; or he would enter the list of combatants and raise himself by his bravery, (the surest way to distinction in the times of which we are speaking) to a degree of power, that the world should not dare to object to the marriage as unequal.

“The opinion of the world is not what I fear; for things may be different from what you imagine. But enough; I cannot tell you all. There are circumstances in the case, which In short I must insist on your not attempting to see my daughter, but that you endeavour to stifle an unhappy passion, which, should it steal into the heart of Ida, would render her as unfortunate as yourself.”

An impenetrable obscurity reigned in this discourse. The sort of half confidence of Munster appeared unintelligible to Herman, and he was disposed to believe that what he had heard was only meant as a veil to the old man's disinclination, which unable to justify himself by reasonable motives, had obliged him to resort to pretended mysteries.

But a cordial squeeze by the hand, assured

assured Herman that he was mistaken. "No, young man," said he, "I love you: I had even an affection for you when I sought to frustrate your endeavours to gain access to my house: judge then if my sentiments can be altered, now that I am attached to you by gratitude."

Herman received these protestations with coldness, and left the house of Munster with the firm resolution never more to return to it, though his steps continually led him thither without his being aware of it. It is true he had as yet not totally renounced the hope of once more seeing Ida, or her compassionate mother. Even Munster himself, cruel as he thought him, he found it impossible to hate, and to be long absent from the good old man was painful to his heart.

The inclination conceived by this youth, educated in the fastidious notions of a court, for the society of a simple and unpolished citizen, will be thought perhaps extraordinary. But let it be considered, that this citizen was a man of no vulgar merit; and that our hero, besides, who felt for him so tender an affection, had sense and virtue enough to prefer the style of his actions and conversation to the manners of a court so dissolute as that of Wincessaus; he also frequently owned to him-

self, that his detestation of vice, and love of virtue, had been greater, since his acquaintance and intimacy with this upright plebeian.

But sentiments of this nature were not always sufficient to deter him from measures, which he knew would be displeasing to his frank and guileless friend: for he formed the design of procuring a secret interview either with Ida, or her mother; and respecting the latter he was one day successful.

He found the good wife as much prejudiced in his favour as ever. She united with him in complaining of the folly of her husband; told him that she had something of importance to disclose; and appointed an evening, when he would have an opportunity of seeing her, as well as Ida, during the absence of her rigid guardian.

Herman was punctual to the appointment. A female servant, admitted into the secret, informed him however, on his arrival, that her master was not yet gone out, and placed him in a closet adjoining the parlour, where he could hear what was passing between the parents of Ida, and which we shall communicate to the reader.

“And can you still,” said Munster, as Herman began to listen, “can you still
“suppose

“suppose, after what I have said, that I
“have any dislike to the young man?
“believe me, the happiness of Ida is
“scarcely more dear to me, and her hap-
“piness is the sole object I have in view.”

“Nor am I,” said the wife in a tone
of discontent, “governed by any other
“motive.”

“And yet you would take the worst
“means of attaining it.”

“No, they are the best. It is necessary
“she should emerge from the obscurity in
“which she has lived, if we would not
“eternally repent of what we have done.”

“I grant that it is necessary; but not
“by the instrumentality of Herman. Let
“us take the shortest and most direct
“road. What can she hope from a young
“man who has yet to make his fortune,
“and whose return from foreign coun-
“tries she will probably long have to
“wait? beside, he belongs to a family
“which”

“Well, then, agree to my other pro-
“posal.”

“In God’s name, wife, abandon so
“dangerous a scheme! what would Ida
“do in a court like that of Winceslaus?
“reflect on the anxieties we suffered by
“your whim of letting her appear before
“Sophia, on the morrow of All Saints,
“with a valuable present. Would you

“renew those anxieties? O how I regret
“having consented to a measure so ab-
“surd! It is lost labour to make sacri-
“fices to the great: they soon forget those
“from whom they receive obligations.”

“The event would have been differ-
“ent had Ida gone the next day, when the
“empress sent for her, instead of being
“obliged, by your orders, to feign indis-
“position.”

“Alas! had the empress felt for her a
“stronger inclination than is usual to wo-
“men of her rank, would she have con-
“tented herself with a single invitation;
“or, what is more, so totally have for-
“gotten the object that interested her?
“no: and had I been so imprudent as to
“comply with your wishes, Ida would
“have experienced the same fate as
“others, and after spending a few days,
“or a few weeks at court, would have
“been obliged, perhaps, to return to her
“original obscurity, envied, ridiculed and
“hated.”

The wife was silent.

“You acknowledge then, resumed the
“husband, that your first project was
“irrational, ill calculated to answer its
“purpose; and that your second is the
“same?”

“I acknowledge no such thing. My
“project was the reverse of irrational,
“and

“and produced the consequence I expected. I knew that Ida’s appearance would secure her the conquest of one heart at least; and this has actually happened. The good and amiable Herman loves her tenderly. He is the man by whom the hand of fate means to draw her from her present retreat; and he will certainly have her; he will one day share her happiness.”

“Must I a second time remind you of the impossibility of what you propose? an impossibility greater with respect to him than any other person.”

“Do not give yourself the trouble; you will never convince me.”

“What obstinacy! promise at least that you will renounce your new chimeras, and leave matters to me.”

“The fate of Ida interests me more nearly than it does you, and . . .”

“Relinquish your project, Maria; I beg it as a favor. You know how dear she is to my heart, and how much I should rejoice, if . . .”

The entrance of Ida put an end to the conversation. Munster declared his intention of staying at home that evening, and the daughter was desired to take her harp instead of her distaff, to dissipate the clouds of discontent which hung on the minds of her parents.

Herman:

Herman was intitled to some indemnification for the disappointment of his hopes. The pleasure of hearing Ida sing, play and talk, made him forget he was deprived of that of seeing her; and when the confidante came to inform him, that the purpose of his coming was defeated, and that he must depart, she appeared, he thought, too soon. He quitted with regret his obscure retreat, and returned pensively to his home.

CHAPTER IX.

HISTORY does not inform us whether, after the failure of the first, new attempts to obtain a secret interview were made, or whether they were frustrated by the vigilance of Munster. Thus much is certain, that Herman succeeded not in seeing either the mother or the daughter; nor indeed was his residence in Prague long enough for him to practice many manœuvres by which he could at all hope to deceive so circumspect a character as the father of Ida.

Herman remarked, that the coldness of his master, of whom he had so long been the

the favourite, increased towards him every day. "The face of that buffoon," said the emperor one day to madam von Baden, with considerable sarcasm, "bears the exact impression of a note of hand, which he conceives to be due to the family of Munster." Now a countenance like this could not fail to give his majesty sovereign displeasure.

But Wincelaus was mistaken in his conjecture. Munster had too often assured his young friend, that he neither desired nor expected the repayment of what he had lent, for Herman to entertain a thought of reminding his master of so unpleasant a subject. Had the emperor possessed a little more skill in the science of physiognomy, he would have discovered in the face of his chamberlain very different sentiments. Secret chagrin, weariness and disgust of every thing around him, and an ardent desire of happier days, were depicted on it; perhaps there was visible also a degree of regret at having offended a master, who imagined that no one had a right to be dissatisfied but himself.

Our young man no longer doubted the fate that awaited him. Well acquainted with Wincelaus, he read in his eyes the sentence of his disgrace, and he seriously thought of withdrawing himself from court; a resolution which Munster, from whom

whom he had no secret, seconded with all his might.

“ I am glad,” said the old man, “ to see you at last inclined to do of yourself, what I should long ago have advised. What can you expect here? you are spending the prime of life in idleness, and wasting the time and strength that ought to be employed in the career of honor. Quit, young man, quit this place of sloth, and seek, at a distance, some theatre more worthy of your talents, a theatre where you may find at once happiness and glory. Enter the service of some powerful sovereign. Every part of the world is not governed by princes like Wincesslaus. We have the dukes of Austria and Brunswick : in Hungary lives king Sigismund. These are men who do honor to their rank. “ Chuse from among them a master ; and be assured, that he, whom you have so often called your father, will not abandon you. I trust you will not think it degrading to receive from a citizen, who is wealthy, that succour of which your ill fortune has left you in want : such pride has doubtless, no place in your heart.

“ What I would farther recommend,” said the old man, perceiving that Herman was disposed to interrupt him, “ is, that

“ that you should demand that title of
“ the emperor which, indeed, you al-
“ ready enjoy by courtesy. But I would
“ have you be in reality a knight; though
“ it is whimsical enough to hear this
“ appellation bestowed on beardless cour-
“ tiers, whose whole armour consists of a
“ gold hilted sword, which they fre-
“ quently wear, by mistake, on the right
“ side instead of the left. You, how-
“ ever,” added he, perceiving that Her-
man was piqued at the reflection, “ are
“ not of this number; your courage,
“ and your dexterity in the use of arms,
“ are well known: but it is time that you
“ should quit such effeminate youths,
“ whose society can do you no sort of
“ honor.”

Herman complied with his friend's ad-
vice, and solicited of Winceflaus the ho-
nor of knighthood. Winceflaus, whose
enmity to his former favourite was not so
great as to wish to deprive him either of
his reputation or his life, was pleased to
find so easy a way of getting rid of him,
and granted his request.

Munster, the oracle of our young man,
had farther advised him to procure ad-
mission into one of the numerous orders
which existed at that time, and the mem-
bers of which were spread all over Europe.
To this Herman equally consented, and,
in

in consideration of the state of his heart, he chose the *order of fidelity*, or as it was called, even in a period so remote, and not without reason, the *order of the good old times*.

Our honest plebeian could with difficulty refrain from laughter, when the young knight made his appearance, decorated with the badge of his fraternity, which consisted of a rose-coloured sleeve peeping from under his mail; and he expressed to him a wish that he had entered into an order commanding more respect: an observation to which Herman, who knew of nothing more serious or more respectable than his love, made no reply.

Our new dubbed hero had never suffered himself to doubt that he should at least be permitted to see Ida on the evening of the day of his instalment, and had exulted in the hope; but he soon found himself mistaken, and was given to understand that this was a happiness which he must not expect till the day of his quitting Prague: an expedient to which Munster had recourse in order to hasten his departure. To resist the daily importunities of his wife, and the solicitations of his young friend, was an effort too painful for the old man. Beside, according to his mode of thinking, Ida and Herman ought not to see each other at all, as it was impossible.

ble for them to be united ; and he thought it therefore of the utmost consequence, that the latter should be gone.

Meanwhile the mother of Ida was extremely desirous of speaking at least once more to the young knight, that she might be enabled to execute, by his means, a project she had long had in her head, and of which the reader must have perceived some traces. But this was what Munster was anxious to prevent, and was one of the reasons which made him urge so strongly the departure of Herman. Thus the wished-for interview could not take place.

On the evening that preceded our knight's departure, Munster expressed a wish to be informed of the reasons that had brought him, at so early an age, to the court of Wincellaus. Herman, who had too much gratitude to his old friend to refuse him such a request, readily consented : " but," added he, " may I not in my turn ask a similar favour ? I find in your family such extraordinary circumstances . . . Ida, for example, possessing so many accomplishments, without rank, without birth : yourself, more noble minded, displaying truer dignity of sentiment, than any lord of the court, and yet an humble plebeian . . . It is impossible."

" You

“ You do extreme honor to our station,” replied the old man in a tone of irony; “ but it may perhaps exhibit at present more proofs of true nobility than yours. Since however you deem me so extraordinary a personage, know, that in my youth I bore arms; that I long resided at the courts of princes, and have travelled through Italy and England, where I studied the best performances of the art which I have for many years exercised. The profession of a soldier did not enrich me; I grew tired of it, and returned to that which I had first been taught. It has afforded me a subsistence, and made me what I am; that is to say, a free and independent being, standing in need of the protection of no sovereign whatever, whereas the sword would ever have left me their slave. I was the subject of a prince, who, after I had rendered him a thousand services, refused me a single one, which to him was a trifle, though of the utmost importance to me. I was in love with a handsome young woman, who was in the service of his wife. As she was not a free-woman, I demanded her liberty, in order to espouse her; a request which he thought proper to deny. At length an event happened which gave
“ us

“ us an opportunity of escaping. The
“ business, I must confess, was not con-
“ ducted in a manner altogether seemly ;
“ but to what will not the love of women
“ drive us ?

“ We found an asylum at Nuremberg.
“ Our late master was the sworn enemy
“ of the imperial cities, and they in their
“ turn as cordially hated him. Our flight
“ served us as a recommendation. The
“ freedom of the city was granted me,
“ and I entered upon my profession. My
“ performances were admired ; I acquir-
“ ed reputation, and money poured in
“ upon me from every quarter. I was
“ happy, and should have continued so to
“ this hour, if the fickle disposition of
“ my wife had not led me to remove.
“ Out of politeness to her, I accepted an
“ offer that was made me of ornamenting
“ the cathedral at Prague ; though I had
“ much rather have refused it, not only
“ from attachment to a place where I had
“ found so welcome a reception, but for
“ other reasons which I could mention.
“ But these are foreign to the matter in
“ question. Such are the outlines of my
“ story. And now, my friend, begin the
“ recital of yours, which will doubtless
“ prove more interesting.”

CHAPTER X.

HISTORY OF HERMAN.

“MY recital would certainly interest you,” replied the chevalier, “could I relate to you at large the story of my father and grand-father, and the different events that reduced me to the state in which you find me. A state of such poverty, that either I must remain in the service of a dissolute prince, or turn monk, if I refuse assistance from those to whom I would much rather give it. Pardon me, my dear Munster, and do not be offended that I wish to change places with you, that I would rather load you with benefits, than receive them from you.”

Munster readily comprehended his meaning. The young man had been obliged that very evening to accept, under the name of a loan, the present that had been lately made to the honest citizen by the empress, and which Herman had secretly augmented with what he had been able to add of his own. The manner in which this loan was offered him, was so noble, and at the same time so urgent, that it was impossible for him to refuse it, a circumstance which contributed to heighten his gratitude.

Return-

Returning the old man's squeeze by the hand, the only answer which Munster made him, Herman thus continued his recital. "My ancestors had their faults, and it is I who am doomed to suffer for them. My grandfather, the youngest son of his family, quarrelled with his eldest brother, the present reigning count of Unna. My father drew on himself the anger of my uncle still more, by the part that he and his elder sons took in the war which the knights of St. Martin waged with the count of Wirtemberg; and I, who was then a child, shared in the punishment, without having participated in the offence."

At the name of the count of Wirtemberg, a profound sigh escaped from Munster, and Herman continued his narrative. — "I know not whether you are acquainted with the adventures of count Everard of Wisbaden: but I will endeavour to give you some idea of them."

"You may spare yourself the trouble," said Munster, with a look of discontent. "I know count Wirtemberg and his history somewhat better than you. The knights of St. Martin got intelligence of his residing at Wisbaden. Instigated by the hopes of a rich booty, or perhaps by other motives, they besieged it, and would have made the count and
"all

“ all his people prisoners, had he not contrived to escape by the hollow way which leads by the mountain.”

“ It was that unfortunate and inglorious expedition,” resumed Herman, “ which cost my father and one of my brothers their lives, rendered their names odious, and involved them in the implacable hatred of the chief of our house. With the consent of the emperor, the old count of Unna seized the greater part of our property, and threatened to employ against us the secret tribunal, of which he was chief in the district, should any of us dare to justify my father, or oppose the punishment inflicted on us.”

“ At that time, all this was unintelligible to me, though I heard much talk about it: but of the consequences that ensued I daily became more sensible.”

“ I was the youngest of all my brothers and sisters, some of whom were old enough to be my parents, and ought to have supplied to me the place of those I had lost. Bernard, the eldest, and, of course, chief of the younger branch of the house of Unna, was treated by them all with the profoundest respect; and, whether from attachment to him, or pride of birth, the greatest part embraced a religious life, to enable

“ble him to support with decency the
“name of our house. Hence among my
“relations I can produce ecclesiastics of
“every description: canons, abbeſſes,
“knights of religious orders, nuns in
“abundance, and there would have been
“at least one monk among them, had I
“been disposed to submit my will to that
“of others, for the honor was reserved
“for me of making my vows at the con-
“vent of Korf. To procure me this ho-
“nor the more speedily, a dispensation,
“by means of a sum of money, was ob-
“tained from our holy father the pope,
“purporting, ‘that, in consideration of
“his early wisdom, extraordinary piety
“and wonderful tokens of a divine call,
“the noble Herman of Unna was per-
“mitted, at the age of thirteen, to quit
“the world, and embrace a heavenly
“life.’

“Our family must have been fruitful
“in prodigies of this sort; for two of
“my sisters, who were but a few years
“older than myself, had lately obtained
“a similar favor. But, as I was present
“when they took the veil, and conse-
“quently witnessed the dejection with
“which they accepted the benefit confer-
“red on them, I began to doubt my pre-
“mature wisdom, and signal piety, and
“was

“ was ashamed to avail myself of an honor I so little merited.

“ Poor Agnes! unhappy Petronilla! thought I, as I quitted one morning the convent, never to see it again; would that I could as easily deliver you from the life of angels, which you are compelled to lead on earth, as I voluntarily renounce it for myself! Adieu, unfortunate saints! adieu, ye tombs! adieu, ye echoing vaults of this fatal prison! Perhaps, half a century hence, we may meet again.

“ My disposition had been always gay and active. When only eight years of age I took a pleasure in handling my elder brother's sabre, and in being placed by the servants on his charger. What in my infancy was my sport, became, as I grew up, the object of my most ardent desire. And they wanted me to devote myself to the indolent life of a cloister! It was a project that never pleased me. If I appeared to consent, it was only to render my flight the more easy; and I managed matters so well, that, by the assistance of a domestic of my brother, I effected my escape, and arrived without accident at the asylum I had chosen.

“ This asylum, in which I hoped to find my safety, was the court of Win-
“ cellaus.

“ celsus. I had heard, that it was the
“ duty of an emperor to protect the op-
“ pressed, and considering myself as the
“ most persecuted being on earth, I pre-
“ sented myself before his majesty with
“ as much confidence, as if what I had
“ to ask were not of the nature of a fa-
“ vor, but something to which I had an
“ indisputable right. I conceived it to
“ be an act of justice. But does Wince-
“ flaus understand the claims of oppressed
“ humanity? This was a question I never
“ asked myself. Alas, I little knew the
“ risk I incurred. My lucky star, how-
“ ever, brought me into his presence
“ precisely at one of those moments, so
“ rare, in which he found himself dis-
“ posed to benevolence. You are not to
“ be informed that there is no tyrant,
“ however cruel, who has not slight in-
“ tervals of this kind.

“ I was admitted among his pages.
“ My gratitude, which I in a thousand
“ ways evinced, my liveliness and my
“ gaiety attached him to me. He would
“ have me sleep in his apartment, day and
“ night I must be the agent of his secret
“ commissions; and the indefatigable zeal
“ with which I acquitted myself, obtained
“ me every day a greater share of his con-
“ fidence. In spite of the guise of flat-
“ tery, it was impossible but Winceflaus

“ must sometimes have perceived, in the
“ eyes of those who attended him, a se-
“ cret disapprobation of his conduct.
“ With me, however, he had no such in-
“ convenience to dread, for I imagined
“ that every thing which an emperor did
“ must necessarily be right. It was for
“ this reason he wished to have me con-
“ stantly about his person; and thus was
“ I gradually initiated into all the secrets
“ of his debauched life.”

“ Poor young man!” exclaimed Mun-
ster. “ What a school for thy heart!”

“ No very dangerous one, be assured.
“ I was too young to have any inclination
“ for the practices of my master: beside,
“ I thought them becoming only in him;
“ and felt as little desire to swallow his
“ bumpers or share his mistresses favours,
“ as to wallow in the mire with the
“ swine.

“ On the other hand, my love of arms,
“ and my continual occupations contri-
“ buted not a little to preserve me from
“ such vicious propensities. When Win-
“ cesslaus was asleep, and even when awake,
“ but incapable of thinking, from intoxi-
“ cation, moments when he wished not to
“ see me, I used to repair to old Herman
“ of Hertinghausen, esquire to the em-
“ peror, who, from the similarity of our
“ christian names, had conceived a re-
“ gard

“gard for me. He spared neither pains
“nor expence to make me an accomplish-
“ed knight, even while I was yet but a
“simple page. Success rendered me
“vain. All my comrades hated me, not
“excepting Kunzman, the son of old Her-
“tingshaulen, for the haughtiness with
“which I carried myself, on account of
“the preference which was shewn me;
“and a sword, which the emperor per-
“mitted me to wear, by distinguishing
“me from other youths of my age, filled
“up the measure of their jealousy. They
“styled me the page in armour; and I
“was vain of the title, though it was
“given me in derision.

“The desire of perfecting myself in the
“exercises of chivalry, and of serving the
“emperor with fidelity, wholly occupied
“my mind: every thing else was indif-
“ferent to me. It was known that I was
“the favourite of Wincelaus, and of con-
“sequence every body refrained from
“speaking before me, who never conceal-
“ed from him a syllable of what formed
“the common conversation of his sub-
“jects; I mean the indignation excited
“by his extravagances. Few had the
“simplicity to believe with me, that there
“were things allowable in an emperor,
“which ought to be punished in a private
“individual. Thus he was hated and

“ despised by the people, and they secretly formed a plan to rid themselves of him.

“ It was not till late that the emperor was apprized of this conspiracy. When at length he found it necessary to be upon his guard, things had been carried so far, that he did not think himself safe at Prague, and was obliged to make his escape in the night accompanied by the most faithful of his servants, of whom I was one. He betook himself to a castle a few leagues from the city, to which he had given the name of Conradsbourg, and which he had fortified purposely as a retreat in case of an event of this nature.

“ Here I first learned the cause of our sudden flight. I was astonished to find that an emperor could incur any danger ; and, from the notions I had formed of the rights of sovereigns, I conceived the treatment of Winceslaus, who had told me of his situation, to be so unjust and unworthy, that I swore to defend him to the last drop of my blood.

“ Winceslaus laughed, and addressing me by a filthy nickname, with which he sometimes honoured me : “ Were things come to that pass, said he, that thou wert to be my only defender, I mould be in a woeful plight indeed.

“ Leave

" Leave thy sword in its scabbard, let thy
 " arm be at rest, and make use of thy
 " ears. Listen when thou seest two peo-
 " ple talking together privately; pretend
 " to be asleep; speak of me with con-
 " tempt; say that I have beaten thee,
 " that thou hatest me, and wishest me
 " dead; thus will they place confidence
 " in thee, thou wilt learn every thing,
 " and we shall know what measures to
 " take for our safety.'

" This advice of my master was so con-
 " trary to my own way of thinking, and
 " I trusted so much to the goodness of
 " my sword, that I neglected every other
 " mode of serving him; and, though we
 " had none but secret attempts to fear, I
 " thought only of opposing myself to open
 " force.

" The general discontent towards Win-
 " cesslaus continued to encrease. Soon
 " after his arrival at Conradsbourg, he
 " had caused three of the principal mal-
 " contents to be publicly executed; and
 " the same day, my faithful instructor in
 " chivalry, old Hertinghausen, was found
 " assassinated on the road from Conrads-
 " bourg to Prague. In the bark of the
 " tree, at the foot of which he fell, the
 " perpetrators had stuck two poinards,
 " stained with his blood, on which were
 " engraven, in ill formed letters, the fol-

"lowing words * : *executed by the free*
 " *judges for the crime of high treason.* No
 " one, except myself, was ignorant of the
 " author of this infamous deed. I ran to
 " wash with my tears the body of my un-
 " fortunate friend; but it was already
 " conveyed away from the curiosity of the
 " people. On my return I met Kunz-
 " man, son of the deceased, who said to
 " me, with despair in his countenance;
 " 'This is one of the noble exploits of
 " that dear master of whom thou art so
 " fond!'

" I hesitated not to appear before the
 " emperor, and repeat to him what I had
 " just heard from Kunzman. The pusil-
 " lanimity of Winceflaus was so great,
 " that he condescended to justify himself
 " to one of his servants; and I, who had
 " the utmost confidence in him, was easi-
 " ly persuaded. " You see plainly enough,
 " said he to me, that it was not I, but the
 " agents of the secret tribunal who com-
 " mitted the murder. I did not even
 " know that Hertinghausen had been
 " guilty of treason: but be that as it may,

* Winceflaus, as history informs us, had thought
 proper to usurp the right of creating free counts and
 free judges of the secret tribunal; but these were
 not acknowledged by the ancient ones legally esta-
 blished. This remark will perhaps be found neces-
 sary for the understanding of what follows.

" you

“ you may be convinced from his ex-
“ ample, that the most secret crimes are
“ punished by divine vengeance.”
“ I blindly believed all that Wincesslaus
“ told me, and promised to bring over
“ Kunzman to the same way of thinking.
“ The next day, as I was passing under an
“ arched passage in the fortress, I received
“ a violent blow on the side, without see-
“ ing the person by whom it was given :
“ I thought, however, that the voice I
“ heard was Kunzman’s.—‘ Cursed in-
“ former,’ it cried, ‘ thy tongue is the
“ cause that I must fly my country.’—
“ With the violence of the blow I had
“ fallen to the ground. I got upon my
“ feet, as expeditiously as I was able, but
“ saw nobody. I reflected on the words,
“ but could not comprehend them. I for-
“ got them therefore, and thought of them
“ no more, notwithstanding I learned the
“ next day, that Kunzman, whom I had
“ never loved, and who was one of the
“ pages of Wincesslaus, had disappeared.
“ It never once entered my head, that I
“ had spoken imprudently of him to the
“ emperor, and had by that means ex-
“ posed him to persecution, and obliged
“ him to fly.
“ These, and other instances of ven-
“ geance, inflicted by the emperor, led
“ persons to act with greater circumspec-
“ tion.

“ tion. He was hated in secret and flatter-
“ ed in public. As I was also feared,
“ whatever was likely to give umbrage
“ was carefully concealed from me; and
“ thus both master and servant thought
“ themselves as much in safety as ever.

“ Winceßlaus, however, durst not yet
“ return to Prague: but he found it so
“ easy to satisfy his inclination for women,
“ as well as wine, in the environs of Con-
“ radsbourg, a place indeed too well cal-
“ culated for so vile a debauchee, that he
“ gave himself little concern about his
“ capital.

“ In the district were various sorts of
“ monks, and they so well understood
“ how to make their court to him, that
“ the emperor frequently invited them to
“ come and get drunk with him, and vi-
“ sited them in return, to procure himself
“ the same pleasure. Winceßlaus was at
“ heart no great friend to monks; but
“ their wine was delicious, and that was
“ sufficient to induce him to forget his
“ antipathy, and live with them on terms
“ of the most brotherly affection.

“ During one of these visits to the con-
“ vent of Braunau, his enemies, probably
“ with the connivance of his jovial hosts,
“ attacked him and carried him prisoner
“ to Prague. I was not present. My rea-
“ son, which began to unfold with my ri-
“ pening

“pening years, prevented me from re-
 “maining as heretofore, the tranquil
 “spectator of the emperor’s debauchery.
 “His aspect, when intoxicated, was dread-
 “ful; and the addition of perhaps a do-
 “zen drunken monks, who surrounded
 “him on these occasions, was to me, who
 “had frequently been forced to witness
 “similar scenes, so disgusting, that I
 “thought myself happy to be excused
 “from attending him at Braunau, and in-
 “stead of it to go a hunting. It was
 “therefore not till my return from the
 “chace that I learned the news of his
 “being taken. My zeal to serve him was
 “immediately roused. Both gratitude
 “and affection loudly called upon me to
 “save a man, who merited in reality
 “neither of these sentiments. I gallop-
 “ed full speed towards the city, hoping
 “to overtake the conductors of Wince-
 “slaus, and promising myself to achieve
 “miracles of valour; but I found every
 “thing quiet on the road, as well as in
 “the city.

“When I arrived at the gate, I fell
 “from my horse out of breath. Some
 “persons who were near came to my as-
 “sistance, and asked me some questions.
 “I spoke in high terms of the imprison-
 “ment of my master, and demanded
 “where he was.—‘Hold your peace,’ said

“ a soldier on guard ; thank God we have
“ him, and be not so singular as to grieve
“ for an event at which every body else is
“ rejoiced : but it is not proper to talk of
“ this business yet, the emperor has too
“ many partisans among the people.”

“ I had no occasion to know more ; I
“ escaped, and ran through the city, pro-
“ claiming the imprisonment of Winces-
“ laus, and my intention to deliver him ;
“ and before a single person interposed to
“ stop me, I found myself at the head of
“ a considerable troop, who accompanied
“ me to the tower where the emperor was
“ confined, and swore to conquer or to
“ die, in rescuing their good, their gene-
“ rous prince, the protector of liberty, and
“ the friend of the people.

“ Certainly none of the subjects of Win-
“ cellaus had so much reason to love him
“ as the lower class of the people. Their
“ poverty screened them from those extor-
“ tions to which the rich were exposed.
“ He permitted them every sort of liberty,
“ and was not ashamed, upon occasion, to
“ drink even with a porter. He knew,
“ also, how to procure them bread at a
“ cheap rate ; but it was always at the ex-
“ pence of the rich, and without the smal-
“ lest cost to himself.

“ Circumstances of this nature were
“ vaunted to the skies during our march
“ to

“ to the prison, which we attacked so vi-
“ gorously, that a little more firmness, or
“ a better leader, would infallibly have
“ gained us the victory. But we were
“ quickly dispersed, and the only advan-
“ tage I derived from the enterprize, was
“ the being made prisoner, and shut up in
“ the tower in which my master was con-
“ fined.

“ This consoled me. I hoped that we
“ should be placed in the same apartment,
“ and that I should enjoy the pleasure of
“ hearing from his mouth the praises of
“ my fidelity. But my expectations were
“ cruelly disappointed. I was thrown
“ into a filthy dungeon, where I remained
“ till the emperor had contrived to set
“ himself at liberty, without my having
“ in the slightest degree contributed to it,
“ a circumstance at which I was very fore-
“ ly grieved. The idea suggested to him
“ by Madam von Baden, of throwing him-
“ self into the river, and then saving
“ himself by swimming, or by means of a
“ boat, was so simple and so easily execut-
“ ed that I could not forgive myself for
“ not thinking of it. I envied Susanna
“ the part she performed on this extraor-
“ dinary occasion, and was vexed to per-
“ ceive that another had rendered my
“ master more essential service than myself.
“ At length I was also set at liberty.
“ Perhaps Winceilaus began again to ren-
“ der

“ der himself feared, and it was not
“ thought prudent longer to ill-treat one
“ of his servants ; or perhaps I was con-
“ sidered as a person of too little import-
“ ance to be detained after my master
“ had escaped.

“ I was no sooner at large, than I haf-
“ tened to Conradsbourg. There I relat-
“ ed to the emperor what I had done,
“ and the disaster that had befallen me :
“ but instead of the praises I expected
“ or the least token of pity for my mis-
“ fortunes, I was received with an air of
“ coolness and dissatisfaction. My want
“ of address, he pretended was the sole
“ cause of my failure. I ought to have
“ planned my scheme as wisely as Su-
“ sanna had planned hers. It was a dis-
“ grace to me to have been surpassed by
“ a woman.—Such, and more mortifying,
“ still were the reproaches he made me.

“ I burned with impatience to see this
“ heroine, Susanna. No one else was
“ talked of at Conradsbourg. I had form-
“ ed the sublimest idea of her : but my
“ expectations were once more disappoint-
“ ed. Instead of a beauty, as she was
“ styled by the flattery of the courtiers,
“ out of deference to the emperor, who
“ was distractedly fond of her, I saw a
“ coarse, ordinary creature, whose greatest
“ merit, in the eyes of Wincesslaus, I
“ quickly

“ quickly perceived consisted in her com-
“ plaisance, which, indeed, was boundless.

“ Unable to conceal the contempt with
“ which this woman inspired me, I sunk
“ greatly in my master’s opinion; beside
“ that he sometimes took it into his head
“ to be jealous of me. I was tall, young,
“ tolerably well made, and madam von
“ Baden had said that I was handsome.
“ All this disgusted me, and the attach-
“ ment I had hitherto felt for Wincefflaus,
“ rapidly diminished.

“ I was now become so little necessary
“ to the emperor, that I might spend
“ whole days in hunting without being
“ missed by him. On one of those days
“ he fell a second time into the hands of
“ his enemies. I took care not to repeat
“ on this, the imprudence into which I
“ had fallen on the former occasion.

“ Meanwhile the liberation of the empe-
“ ror was resolved on in my mind; but
“ my motive was the love of glory, for I
“ no longer felt either gratitude or attach-
“ ment. I was desirous only of retrieving
“ the reputation I had lost by my first suc-
“ cessless enterprize, and of wiping away
“ the reproach of having been surpassed
“ by a woman.

“ As I could not bear the idea of being
“ in any respect compared with the despi-
“ cable mistress of Wincefflaus, I rejected,

“ the

“ the instant they presented themselves,
“ every project that bore the least resem-
“ blance to hers. And yet, in spite of
“ my repugnance, fate decreed, that I
“ should be reduced to the necessity of em-
“ ploying precisely the same means. All
“ the artifices I practised to extricate the
“ emperor from the tower of Prague, were
“ frustrated; and it happened, after the
“ time and pains I had wasted, and money
“ I had spent in corrupting his guards,
“ that he was suddenly removed to Krum-
“ lau, where my efforts to deliver him
“ proved equally abortive, till I resorted
“ to the expedient of Susanna, which I
“ had so positively determined to avoid.

“ I gained over to my purpose a fisher-
“ man. We rowed at night under the
“ window of the prison where the emperor
“ was confined. Luckily this window
“ had no bars; and my voice informed
“ him that we were there to assist his
“ escape. We spread a large net on the
“ water, and begged his majesty to throw
“ himself into it. This operation we were
“ obliged to repeat for several nights to-
“ gether, before the dastardly Wince-
“ flaus could summon resolution enough
“ to take the leap. On the third even-
“ ing wine came to our aid; and it is im-
“ possible to say whether it was his own
“ free will or the fumes of intoxication
“ that

“ that threw him into our arms. Be that
“ as it may, he was saved : but instead of
“ thanking us, he complained of his fall,
“ refused the fisherman the reward I had
“ promised, and would certainly have
“ been delivered up to his enemies by our
“ interested conductor, had I not appeased
“ him by some trifling presents, and by
“ assuring him that, as to the remainder
“ of his claim, it was I, not the emperor,
“ whom he might consider as his
“ debtor.

“ This promise, on my part, satisfied
“ the fisherman. Winceßlaus, one would
“ suppose, must have been mortified to
“ find the word of one of his servants
“ have more weight than his own : but
“ he discovered no such sentiment. He
“ rubbed his arms and sides, and grumbled
“ and moaned over his pains till we
“ reached the opposite bank of the river.

“ I delivered him into the hands of
“ Susanna, who nursed him for two or
“ three days when he found himself perfectly
“ recovered. It was then he first
“ thought proper to return me some slight
“ acknowledgement for the service I had
“ rendered him.

“ ‘ Herman,’ said he to me, ‘ I am satisfied
“ with thy conduct. Thou hast had
“ the skill to catch in thy net the greatest
“ fish in the empire. If thou canst spread
“ it

“ it so as to take also my enemies, I will
“ load thee with favours, and thou shalt
“ have no farther need to be a fisherman.”

“ I perfectly understood what was meant
“ by this figurative language. I begged
“ time to consider of it, avowing however
“ to his majesty, that I was more inclin-
“ ed to open war, than secret manœuvres:

“ In the mean time we had every day
“ deserters from Prague, who informed
“ us that it was seriously intended to at-
“ tack Conradsbourg, as it was by no
“ means likely, after what had happened,
“ that Winceßlaus would again suffer him-
“ self to be surprized out of his castle.
“ It appeared also that the appointment of
“ a new emperor was in contemplation;
“ and that the day when Winceßlaus
“ should fall a third time into the hands
“ of his enemies would be that of his
“ death.

“ Prague had a numerous garrison.
“ Not that it was thought necessary on our
“ account, whose strength excited little
“ apprehension; but to act against those
“ who, after the death of Winceßlaus,
“ might dispute the crown. Every day
“ fresh troops arrived in the city, and we
“ were told that there was shortly expect-
“ ed a considerable reinforcement from
“ Hungary, sent by king Sigismond.

“ Sigismond

“ Sigismund was the brother of Win-
“ celsaus, and, on his demise without chil-
“ dren, heir to the crown of Bohemia;
“ Though this was sufficient for the em-
“ peror to hate him, yet were the senti-
“ ments of Sigismund too noble to seek to
“ merit his brother's enmity either by at-
“ tempting his life, or seizing his throne:
“ and it appears, that, in consenting to as-
“ sist the dissatisfied subjects of Wincelsaus,
“ his view was to enable them to check
“ the career of his dissipation, and pre-
“ scribe terms to him on which he should
“ still be permitted to reign. It seems
“ too, that Sigismund was ignorant of the
“ ill intentions of the Bohemians towards
“ their master.

“ I had heard enough of the king of
“ Hungary to form this opinion of his
“ character, and I fortunately brought
“ over the emperor to the same way of
“ thinking. He accordingly resolved to
“ write to him, and demand his assistance.
“ This was his letter.

“ ‘ And are you also against me? Oh!
“ think of your father. Wrest not from
“ me what was given me by him. Em-
“ ploy not your power in favor of my
“ enemies, but employ it rather to save
“ an unfortunate brother.’

“ The court of Wincelsaus was then so
“ deserted, so destitute of persons of con-
“ sideration,

“ sideration, that he was obliged to con-
“ side to me, a page of seventeen, the de-
“ livery of this important letter. I be-
“ lieve, however, that few would have
“ executed the office better. I was to
“ supply, by conversation, what he dared
“ not commit to paper; and the warmth
“ with which I pleaded my master’s cause,
“ made such an impression on Sigismond,
“ that he determined in favor of Wince-
“ flaus. ‘A sovereign,’ said he, ‘who
“ has such servants, cannot be so bad as
“ my brother is represented.’”

“ Sigismond at length thought proper
“ to make trial of my fidelity, and not
“ being dissatisfied with me, he loaded me
“ with his confidence. Nothing but my
“ youth prevented his giving me the
“ command of the troops which he sent
“ to his brother. He recommended me
“ however strongly to his general, a war-
“ rior of no common merit, yet who had
“ the modesty to ask my advice on the
“ order of our march, and to follow it.

“ The inhabitants of Prague had long
“ expected the troops of king Sigismond,
“ which they supposed were to side with
“ them against the emperor. Accord-
“ ingly we gave ourselves out for their allies:
“ nor was it till we were in the heart of
“ the city, that we declared ourselves
“ their enemies.

“ The

“ The taking of the castle of Wischerad
“ was, in the general’s opinion, the point
“ of most importance. In the attack
“ much blood was spilt, but we at last car-
“ ried it; and the emperor, who was ap-
“ prised of all our measures, was suffi-
“ ciently near, to come at the first signal,
“ to take possession of this fortress.

“ From the battlements of the castle he
“ shewed himself to the people, with a
“ numerous train of attendants. Having
“ refrained that day from drinking, he
“ was capable of speaking with a certain
“ degree of energy; and he was proclaim-
“ ed sovereign anew. He granted a gene-
“ ral amnesty, and, to confirm it, the prin-
“ cipal inhabitants of the city were invit-
“ ed to his table. My heart beat with joy,
“ when I beheld the preparations for such
“ an entertainment. For the first time in
“ my life I thought Wincesslaus great, and
“ worthy of his rank, since he was capa-
“ ble of pardoning his enemies with such
“ true magnanimity. I threw myself at
“ his feet, as if to thank him for his mer-
“ cy to others. I had always apprehend-
“ ed scenes of blood, should Prague again
“ fall into his hands; and I was delight-
“ ed at so agreeably finding myself mis-
“ taken.

“ The emperor, however, rudely re-
“ pulled me from him, and called me an
“ effemi-

“ effeminate fool. It was not till the end
“ of the repast, that I began to suspect
“ what had rendered the expression of my
“ feelings so disagreeable to him. Win-
“ cesslaus could not receive with pleasure
“ testimonies of gratitude and admiration
“ of which he knew himself so little deserv-
“ ing.

“ The guests were sitting tranquilly at
“ table. The wine, which flowed plenti-
“ fully, inspired them with gaiety. The
“ good citizens of Prague, at their sove-
“ reign's request, pointed out to him, with
“ confidence, the changes they wished
“ to see take place under his future go-
“ vernment. Winceßlaus promised every
“ thing; and these poor deluded people,
“ swore to him eternal fidelity, and a de-
“ votion without bounds.

“ The emperor then took his glass, and
“ drank to the stability of the peace that
“ had just been concluded. His guests
“ pledged him: but, alas! it was the sig-
“ nal of their death. Twenty sabres in-
“ stantly glittered behind them. The
“ greater part fell beneath the murdering
“ steel, before they perceived themselves
“ in danger, and the floor was deluged
“ with mingled streams of blood and of
“ wine.

“ It is impossible to describe to you
“ what I felt on this terrible occasion.

“ Despair

“Despair for an instant rendered me motionless: but speedily recovering myself, my first thought was to intreat Winceslaus to spare those unhappy beings; my second to stand up in their defence. Then reflecting, that neither of these steps could save them, and having beheld an honest old man of fourscore, whom I had always respected for his venerable appearance, murdered by my side, I fell senseless on the floor. My agitation, my surprise, my despair, were too great to be resisted. I was young too, and though I had seen the blood of an enemy flowing in battle, I had never beheld that of the innocent shed at a feast. Do not laugh at my weakness: I was forced to sink under it.”

“Why,” cried Munster, “attempt to justify yourself? What would deserve praise, if your conduct on that occasion could be blamed?”

“And yet blamed it was. Winceslaus treated me as a weak and pusillanimous being, terrified at the sight of blood; and for three days I was forbidden to appear at court.”

“I ardently wished never to see again that cavern of murderers. My heart was completely alienated from the emperor; and I imparted to the commander of the Hungarians, the only person

“ person who visited me during my confinement, the desire I had to enter into the service of the king his master.

“ That brave soldier, who loved me, counselled me to remain at the court of Bohemia. ‘ You behold,’ said he, ‘ what has passed with a too rigid eye: reason of state justify many actions that have an appearance of injustice. It was in a manner impossible the emperor should let the rebels go wholly unpunished.’

“ I made a long speech in defence of my opinion; to which my friend answered only by his silence: and I saw too plainly, that the world, and even the most enlightened part of it, thought of certain matters very differently from inexperienced innocence.

“ My confidence in the general at length determined me to pardon Wincesslaus an action of which I had no right to constitute myself the judge. He advised me to re-establish myself in the emperor’s favor, should he be disposed to receive me as before; to turn to advantage the influence I had over him, and not forfeit by a precipitate retreat, the recompense due to me for the important service I had rendered him.

“ The time of my confinement, which I would willingly have prolonged, being expired, I again appeared at court.

“ The

“ The kindness with which the emperor
“ received me, attached me to him afresh ;
“ and the decree condemning those who
“ had been killed having been made pub-
“ lic, I resolved to drive from my mind
“ every remembrance of that fatal night,
“ that I might not relapse into doubt whe-
“ ther they were justly or unjustly put to
“ death.

“ Wincesslaus seemed to have changed
“ his way of life, and to conduct himself
“ better than he had heretofore done. He
“ remained for days together free from
“ intoxication. His bottle companion,
“ the prince of Ratibor, who was detested
“ by the people, remained at Conrad-
“ bourg ; neither Susanna nor any other
“ of his mistresses appeared ; and a mar-
“ riage was talked of with Sophia, daugh-
“ ter of the duke of Bavaria.

“ The whole country was rejoiced at
“ the latter resolution of the emperor,
“ every person fancying, that a virtuous
“ spouse would complete the reformation
“ that was begun. For my part, I felt
“ myself like others elated with hope, and
“ was attached anew towards my master.
“ I saw him live in a manner so different
“ from what had formerly displeased me,
“ that I swore never to quit him : an oath
“ which I may break without offending
“ my

“ my conscience, since my hopes are completely destroyed.

“ Sophia, the charming, the virtuous
“ Sophia, is indeed become our empress;
“ but how slight are the traces of reformation she was expected to work! On the
“ very day of the wedding, the prince of
“ Ratibor again made his appearance;
“ and with him all the ancient habits of
“ debauchery. He was soon followed by
“ the worthless Sufanna. Wincesslaus had
“ the matchless effrontery to present her
“ himself to his wife. O Munster! I
“ could tell you of scenes Hapless,
“ unfortunate Sophia!

“ But of what am I thinking! my business is to relate my own, not her adventures. But I am now arrived at the
“ close of my recital, at the most important events of my life. The appearance
“ of Ida, the love I conceived for her, my
“ consequent unhappiness, the necessity I
“ am under of quitting her: O my father!
“ all this you are acquainted with, and I
“ have nothing more to inform you.”

“ You have forgotten to mention the
“ reward, which your master owed you
“ for the important service you rendered
“ him, and for which your friend the
“ Hungarian advised you to wait at
“ Prague.”

“ The

“ The manner in which you speak
“ proves sufficiently what you think. I
“ remember, indeed, that once, in a fit of
“ drunkenness and gratitude, I was pro-
“ mised the first vacant grand fief of the
“ empire, a promise in which I could place
“ no great confidence, as the gift was much
“ too considerable for me. I therefore
“ modestly declined it, and contented my-
“ self with asking an honourable employ-
“ ment in the army. Instead of that I ob-
“ tained the paltry place of a chamberlain,
“ which, as it was the first favour I receiv-
“ ed, will in all probability be the last.
“ But no : the title of knight, and the per-
“ mission to go and seek my fortune where-
“ ever I please, are surely to be reckoned
“ as something.”

This conversation was followed by a long silence. Munster and his young friend seemed totally absorbed in thought. At length Herman first shook off his melancholy, and imparted to the good citizen his intention of entering into the service of king Sigismund, to whom he was known, and at whose court was his friend, the Hungarian general, whom Herman did not know to be one of the chiefs of the empire.

Munster approved of this design, and promised to give him for esquire, an old and faithful domestic, who had formerly

served in the army of Sigismund; and thus they separated for the evening.

CHAPTER XL.

THE day of Herman's departure arrived. He had paid all those tedious visits of ceremony, which are requisite on such an occasion. One only remained for him to make, but that of all others the most distressing, the visit he owed to the family of Munster. He had to take leave of the good old citizen and his wife; he was once more to see Ida, for her father had promised it, and to imprint upon her cheek his first, perhaps his last salute.

Half intoxicated with pleasure, he repaired to the habitation of his mistress. Munster received him at the door, and led him to the parlour, intreating him to recollect himself, and to spare the feelings of his daughter. Ida was the first object he perceived. He trembled as he approached her. Her paleness, her eyes brimful of tears, almost tempted him to believe that the idea of separation was as painful to her as to himself. For a time they were both silent. Her eyes were cast on the ground: his

his seemed as if they would devour a beloved object, the longer to retain its remembrance.

"My children," cried Munster; "do not thus rend my heart, and augment your own sufferings; embrace quickly, and bid each other adieu."

Herman drew near to kiss the cheek of Ida, who received his salute with all the modesty customary in those days with young women. He took the courage to pass his arm round the neck of his mistress; hers involuntarily opened; she pressed him to her heart, and an adieu, tender as lover ever received, escaped from her lips. Her father made a sign: Ida disengaged herself from the young man's embrace, gave him a last, a lingering look, and withdrew, her cheeks burning with blushes, to her apartment.

Herman, perfectly beside himself when his mistress had disappeared, paid no attention to what Munster addressed to him. The old man was silent; but presently Herman, recovering himself, asked if he were not to see the mother of Ida, and take leave also of her. Munster acquiesced; and she immediately entered. She had purposely waited, in the hope of being able at last to execute part at least of a design she had long resolved upon. Her countenance expressed more anxiousness
F 2 than

than sorrow, and she appeared attentively to observe her husband, in order to seize the first opportunity of speaking a few words unperceived to Herman. At length Munster having turned for a moment towards the window, she whispered to our hero.—“How unlucky,” said she “that you have never attempted to speak to me in private! I had so many things to tell you!”

Munster turned round to make some trifling remark, and the conversation broke off. Herman was in no hurry to take leave, hoping to learn some of the secrets of Ida’s mother. The old gentleman being asked for, probably by his wife’s orders, was obliged to go out of the room; and, the moment he shut the door, she exclaimed: “O sir! one day, one single day more, I intreat you! I have paid a visit to the emperor in behalf of Ida: you must send us, you must remind him, that he owes me a favour which he has promised not to refuse.”

She would have said more, but her husband returned; and though Herman staid yet three tedious hours, Munster stirred not from him for an instant, and his curiosity remained unsatisfied.

“You promised me, my dear Munster;” said the young knight, as he rose to take leave, “a faithful attendant. In that expectation

“pectation I have dismissed all my domestics, and I am anxious to see my future esquire.”

Munster went out to call old Andrew. This was a golden opportunity, which the wife failed not to embrace. . . . “Ida is not our daughter,” said she in a low voice. . . . “I am only her nurse. Offended love, and the dread of leaving her in the hands of a wicked stepmother, induced me” The return of the old gentleman prevented her from finishing her discovery, and soon after appeared the domestic, who swore fidelity to his young master, and obtained from him, in return, the promise of never being abandoned by him; but on the contrary, if fortune proved favourable to Herman, that he would make his old age comfortable to him: a promise which the young knight would assuredly have made with still greater cordiality, had he been capable of noticing the ingenuous and trusty countenance of his new valet, and the warmth with which he entered into his engagement; but, in truth, his mind was at that time otherwise occupied. He thought of nothing but the extraordinary intelligence he had heard from Mrs. Munster, and his only concern was to know more on the subject, or to learn at least the name of Ida’s parents.

All his hopes depended on the embrace he was to receive from Mrs. Munster. In fact she held him a long time in her arms, and had even whispered in his ear: "She is the daughter of the count of . . .," when Munster interfered.

"What are you doing?" cried he, with a smile, as he parted them. "Do you think, young man, that embraces like these are not enough to make me jealous?"

Herman was vexed; and answered the old gentleman with a degree of ill humour, perceiving at the same time traces of a similar sentiment in the eyes of his friend. It was indeed highly improbable, that a man of so much penetration should not have perceived something of what was endeavoured to be concealed from him.

They parted then: and the various sentiments that occupied their minds, as surprise, discontent, and disappointed hope, scarcely left room for the entrance of sorrow; so that at the moment of taking leave, a moment so much dreaded, there was not a single tear shed.

CHAPTER XII.

HERMAN mounted his horse, and galloped full speed out of the city. So many different thoughts distracted his attention, that he perceived neither the length of his journey, nor the approach of night. He did not even answer the question of old Andrew, who asked where he meant to take up his lodging. The kiss he had received from Ida, which could leave him no doubt of her love; the news of her noble birth, so delightfully flattering to his vanity; the uncertainty of her name; were ample subjects for his profoundest meditation. He thus entirely forgot the business he had undertaken for Mrs. Munster; the visit the honest city dame had paid to the emperor, the promise of which he was to remind him, and on account of which he had been so urgently pressed to remain at least one day longer at Prague.

It is impossible for us to say, how the thought recurred to him; but it is certain, that on a sudden he began to consider where he was, and, seeing night coming on, and Prague at a great distance, he was enraged at his forgetfulness.

"Let us instantly go back," said he to his servant, turning about his horse at the same time "I have a commission to the emperor, the execution of which is indispensable. I have"

Andrew had already more than once suspected, that Herman was not perfectly in his senses; and his suspicions were confirmed when he perceived the warmth with which he spoke, the want of connexion in what he said, and his eager and perturbed looks.

Our knight, however, returned by the way he had come, with such expedition, that Andrew lost sight of him, before he had time to consider what measures were to be taken for the cure of his unhappy master.

To follow and overtake him, was the most necessary step for the present. And this he accordingly effected, resolving not to lose him again from his sight, that he might always have an eye on his actions.

Our historian does not inform us of the hour at which Herman arrived at Prague, nor of the time when his trusty esquire discarded the false opinion he had conceived of him. Be that as it may, every thing conspired to prolong and increase our hero's impatience. To go to court that evening, or rather that night, was impossible. In the morning he learnt, that the emperor had

had set off the night before for Conradsbourg. Immediately he repaired thither, and was given to understand that he was gone to Kramlau. There Herman was not more fortunate. He was told of several other places, to which he repaired with similar success. At last, after travelling three or four days to no purpose, he returned to Conradsbourg, which Winceflaus had never quitted. But all his attempts were vain to gain admittance to those, to whom he had formerly so easy access. Every door was shut against him. Obligated to relinquish his purpose of executing himself, the commission that brought him back, he entrusted it to one of his ancient friends at court, who at length deigned to see him. The courtier promised to execute it with punctuality, and forgot it the next moment.

Herman again took his way to Hungary. The extraordinary circumstances, that had at first excited such strong emotions, became familiar to him, and he began to turn his attention to other objects. Andrew, on his part, discovered, that his master had in reality, as much sense as other men; and that his heart was as pure as that of an angel. His gentleness and affability gained him so completely the affection of his old esquire, that he would have sacrificed his life for him, and consequently

Herman had just reason to believe, that he would not refuse him a less important service.

Our young knight was not ignorant, that Andrew had resided for many years in the family of Munster. It was possible, that he might be acquainted with Ida's birth; and, accordingly, Herman sought to draw from him what he knew of the matter. But either he had nothing to communicate to him, or Munster had been too prudent to give him a servant, capable of disclosing to his new master, the secrets of him whose service he had quitted.

The same depression of spirits, which Herman experienced from his disappointed hopes, prevailed at Prague in the house of Munster. The old gentleman was displeased with his wife, and regretted the absence of his young friend, though he still retained a little anger against him. Ida wept for her dear Herman, but dared not let her tears be perceived by any eye, but hers whom she called her mother. And Mrs. Munster daily expected to be sent for to court, to be asked what she wanted: but expected it in vain.——“He must have forgotten me,” said she to herself, a little out of humour: “he must surely have departed without executing my commission. Yet he was seen at Prague the day after his taking leave of us.”

“ us. He was seen also at Conradsbourg,
“ where the emperor resides. Let us have
“ a little patience : when Winceflaus re-
“ turns all will go well.”

Winceflaus returned : but the honest citizen's wife was still not sent for. Days, weeks, months passed away : at length she resolved to take a step, which she was sure would not only gain her access, but be pleasing to the emperor, and obtain for her what she desired.

One day, in Munster's absence, having put on her Sunday attire, she took from their private treasure, which she had helped her husband to bury, two hundred crowns of gold, which were at least half what they possessed. Then reflecting for a moment, whether it would not be an affront to the emperor to offer him such a trifle, and whether she had not better give him the whole, that she might be certain of success, she at last added to the sum fifty crowns more, which she had herself hoarded up ; and thus equipped, she set out for court.

The memoirs before us, relate not the manner in which she delivered her present to the emperor, nor the favour she suppliated. With respect to the latter, however, something may be inferred from the result of her visit : and as to the former, it is sufficiently known, that it required no great

great skill to avoid wounding the delicacy of Winceflaus, and prevail on him to receive the price of a favour solicited.

Ida saw her mother go out, and return. Her holiday clothes, her anxious and embarrassed countenance at her departure, and her air of triumph when she came back, struck her: but she enquired not the reason. The remembrance of Herman too powerfully engaged her mind, for her to take concern in any thing else.

“Will you never have done weeping?” said her mother to her one afternoon, as they were at work together. “My daughter, my dear daughter, solitude nourishes your sorrow, and I must devise some means of drawing you from it, if I would not resolve to lose you for ever.”

“Oh! permit me still to live in solitude:” cried Ida, at the same time wiping her eyes with one hand, whilst the other pressed that of her mother to her heart. “What society can I prefer to the tranquil repose I enjoy with the most indulgent of mothers, to whom I am permitted to unbosom my griefs?”

“Not the company of the young women, who are so ready to style themselves your acquaintance, I grant: but if I could place you in a sphere, where you would be surrounded by all that is handsome and accomplished, and where
“you

“ you would notwithstanding bear away
“ the palm; would you not be pleased
“ with it, Ida? There you would not think
“ so often of your Herman; or if you did,
“ your thoughts would be enlivened by
“ hope, and the remembrance of him
“ would cost you fewer tears.”

“ I desire not, my dear mother, what is
“ impossible: all my wishes are confined
“ to being the ornament of your house,
“ since you are pleased so to think me.”

“ But suppose you were destined to live
“ at court?”

“ Thank heaven, I am not.”

“ If the empress, for example, were to
“ admit you as one of her maids of hon-
“ our, would that be such a misfortune?”

“ O that incomparable woman!” said
Ida, kissing the lock of Sophia’s hair, which
she always wore about her neck, in a purse
of gold net-work. “ Yes, to serve her, to
“ see her every day, to be beloved by her,
“ would indeed be a thing”

“ Which you would ardently desire?”

“ Well, then! congratulate yourself; your
“ wishes are accomplished. To-morrow,
“ perhaps, you will quit this life of obscu-
“ rity, which suits you less than you are
“ aware. You will be sent for to court:
“ you will associate with the daughters of
“ the noblest families in the country: and
“ you have nothing to do, but to consider

“ yourself

"yourself as their equal, and forget that
 "you have hitherto been regarded as our
 "daughter."

"What! my dear mother," exclaimed
 Ida, rising hastily from her seat: "forget
 "you! forget my birth! enter into a rank
 "that does not belong to me! Sure-
 "ly you wish to try me. No: your Ida
 "is not so vain; she is not so unmindful
 "of her duty. Do not draw such in-
 "ferences from the words that escaped
 "me. The empress is far less dear to me
 "than you, nor would I exchange your
 "company for her's." Thus saying, the
 lovely Ida affectionately threw her arms
 round the neck of the person whom she
 supposed to be her mother; while the lat-
 ter melted into tears, pressed her to her
 bosom, and, sobbing, declared herself un-
 worthy of such tenderness; an expression
 which afflicted the young maiden, for she
 did not comprehend it so fully as the
 reader.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE day subsequent to this conversa-
 tion, Munster came home about noon,
 quite out of breath. Pale, and almost dis-
 tracted,

tracted, he flung himself into a chair, and for a while paid no attention to the questions of his wife, who repeatedly asked him what was the matter.

“O Maria!” cried he at last: “such news, such melancholy news! you will indeed be astonished: but will you be reasonable enough to hear it, with as much composure as I did? I am just come from court. The emperor sent for me about Ida; he wishes to take her from us; he wishes her to be one of the maids of honour to the empress.”

“Is that the melancholy news?”

“God knows the reason of this favour, as it is termed? But much was said of Ida’s beauty, and the reputation she enjoys: for my part I have never had any opinion of your reputable maidens. Can it be on account of her good qualities, that she is sought after? . . . Ah, wife, wife! of what irreparable folly wert thou guilty, in exhibiting her to public view the day of All Saints!”

“And what, I pray, would you propose to yourself by keeping her always in this obscurity. Is she your daughter? Do you mean to make her the wife of some homely citizen like ourselves? Or must a youth of her own rank come and force our locks and bolts to take her away? You have sent away the worthy

“Herman,

“Herman, and is it likely you should
“give a better reception to another? Are
“we never to think of restoring to her
“that of which we have deprived her?”

“*We*, Maria; *we*? You well know who
“it was that did it. You yourself perpetrated the deed. I would have dissuaded you, and I consented to your wishes at last, only because I must otherwise have lost you. You recollect how you snatched the infant from my arms, when I was going to carry her back to the count. ‘Deliver us up both,’ you said, ‘or deliver up neither of us: where she is, I will be: I cannot leave her alone in the hands of the new countess.’ But Ida had a father: he would have been her protector....

“These reproaches however, came too late: and I acknowledge that the only part that remains for us, is to endeavour to compensate to her what she lost in being taken from her parents. This is a duty we owe not only to Ida for having deprived her of the rank to which she was born, but also to the count, though, probably, he has not once missed her amongst the children of his new spouse.”

“For my part, I have no other desire
“but that count Everard should some day
“learn, that the child he supposes to be
“lost,

“lost, is still alive : but I own, it would
“please me, that he should not be inform-
“ed of this, till we have procured her a
“fortune equal to her birth, without his
“assistance, and without disclosing her
“name. And on this account I cannot
“but regret, that you counteracted all
“my schemes with regard to fir Herman
“of Unna.

“Have you forgotten then the insult
“count Everard received from this fami-
“ly! Old Bernard of Unna, was one of
“the chief of the knights of St. Martin :
“never will the count pardon him the
“affair of Wisbaden.”

“But is the consent of count Everard
“necessary to Ida’s happiness? Had we;
“as I advised, placed her in the rank
“which is her due, every other difficulty
“would have vanished. Our wealth
“would have compensated Herman’s po-
“verty : his bravery would have raised
“him to distinction, and all my wishes
“would have been accomplished. But
“alas! you have destroyed my dearest
“hopes! Herman is gone, and I must
“now form new projects.”

“New projects! Hear mine,
“Maria. We have long been bewildered
“in the mazes of error : let us for once
“follow the direct line of truth : it is the
“easiest, the most secure. Let us wait till
“count

“ count Everard’s dispute with the imperial cities be terminated. It cannot be long. He will then retire to his country seat, and will have leisure to enjoy, with tranquillity, the pleasing surprise I am preparing for him. I will set off with Ida. I will carry with me all the proofs of her birth. I will present myself before him, and say, ‘ my lord, this is your daughter. Such and such reasons induced us to take her away from you. We have been guilty of a fault : but consider the person we restore to you. That little infant, feeble and sickly, what would have become of her, in the melancholy situation in which you then were? We bring her to you, healthy, beautiful, and accomplished.’ What think you, Maria? will not Ida’s appearance ensure our pardon?”

“ Our pardon indeed ! for what in reality ought to obtain us thanks. But what signifies disputing about what has, or what might have happened, when we know what will in reality take place. Ida is going to live at court. If Herman, though separated from her, retain his fidelity, he will find her there. If he do not, her beauty will attract other admirers, and place her in a rank suitable to her descent, without our going
“ ing

“ing to humble ourselves before count
“Everard.”

“Maria, Maria,” cried Munster, looking stedfastly in her face: “from your words, a painful gleam of light flashes on my mind. Is it possible, that you can have had any concern in an event that so much afflicts me? Is it possible, you can have procured, by female artifice, Ida’s removal to court.”

“And supposing I have; what mighty crime would it be?”

These words produced farther interrogations; these interrogations the open avowal of every step she had taken to procure the success of her project; and this avowal, such a quarrel, as had never taken place since their marriage. It was a long time before Mrs. Munster could, by her tears, her prayers, and a true or feigned penitence, make any impression on her irritated husband: and all she effected at last, was the conversion of his rage into bitter reproaches, and remonstrances on the probable effects of her inconsiderate conduct.

“I know not,” said he, “whether you have been imprudent enough to excite any suspicion concerning the birth of this young woman: but this I can tell you, that she never will be regarded as what she is, unless her father publicly
“acknow-

“ acknowledge her for his daughter. On
“ the other hand, if she appear at court,
“ as a simple citizen’s daughter, neither
“ her beauty, nor her virtue, will preserve
“ her from hatred and calumny ; and even
“ should the empress be desirous of pro-
“ tecting her, she will always be despised ;
“ till at last, the jealousy of her compa-
“ nions will drive her from a situation in
“ which you have placed her, without
“ being able to maintain her in it. The
“ corrupt manners of the court of Win-
“ cesslaus will be injurious both to her in-
“ nocence, and her reputation. And
“ know, that your folly will receive a spee-
“ dy and severe punishment : you will not
“ long enjoy the pleasure of seeing your
“ idol, or, at least, you will not be the im-
“ mediate spectator of what you term her
“ happiness. It is currently reported, that
“ the emperor is about to make a tour
“ into Westphalia ; the empress is to ac-
“ company him ; and Ida will certainly
“ not remain at Prague ; unless she shall,
“ before that, have finished her brilliant
“ career, and be returned to us vilified
“ and despised, which is far from impro-
“ bable.”

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. MUNSTER shed a torrent of tears. Her husband was in the right : the last part of his remonstrance was what affected her most. To be deprived of the pleasure of seeing Ida would indeed be a punishment ! She wished to be able to undo all she had taken such pains to accomplish, were it only that she might not be separated from her whom she loved more than all the world beside. But her regret was useless ; the wish was too late : that very evening the empress sent for Ida, and she was informed, that she must quit her father's house immediately to reside at court.

She had always considered the hints of her mother respecting some future change of situation as a jest. Her surprise therefore was extreme, when she received an order so little expected, the motive of which she could not conceive, and which she knew not whether to regard as a matter of joy or of sorrow. She felt that she was not born for the station in which she had hitherto lived ; yet there were things in it which she could not quit without regret. She must renounce the tranquillity to which she was so much attached, a tranquillity

quillity so suitable to her disposition, to encounter the hurry and bustle of the great world: she must abandon the house of her parents, to take up her abode amongst strangers. Munster saw her irresolution, and pitied her. Her supposed mother pressed her to her bosom, as she spoke to her of happiness, of fortune, and a hundred things beside, which Ida could not comprehend, as it was not judged proper to give her the least hint of what concerned her so nearly. Mrs. Munster, perhaps, would willingly have disclosed to her, at this moment, all the secrets of her heart; but her husband had peremptorily forbidden her; and in that at least she could not refuse obedience, after the many steps she had taken without his permission.—“The knowledge of her birth,” said he, “will be of no service to her; whereas if she remain ignorant of it, her modesty, her innocence, her reserve will be more secure; a point of the utmost importance in the dangerous career she is about to enter. I could wish also, that she may remain persuaded she is sent for to court, without any solicitation having been made for the favour: it may inspire her with a kind of pride, that will make her anxious not to forfeit the good opinion which she supposes to have been formed of her. It may happen too, my dear Maria,” said

said he, softening the asperity of the reflection by a gentleness of manner, "that at
" some future period she may not think
" herself obliged to you for the impru-
" dence of having purchased her so dan-
" gerous a post; and I imagine, you have
" no wish to sink in the esteem of so
" virtuous a character."

Munster spoke like an oracle; and for this time his wife listened to his advice. The young lady departed, after having received a variety of good lessons, the principal of which consisted in recommending to her to follow on all occasions the native impulse of her own honest and virtuous heart, and in cases of difficulty to consult her parents: for the good old citizen had some faith in the proverb, which says, "he that goes straight on will never lose
" his way."

Our history does not describe the manner in which Ida was received at court: it says only that the empress, for whom she felt so great attachment, gave her by no means so flattering a reception as when she saw her, for the first time, on the day of All Saints.

Though Sophia's residence at court had not been long, yet was it impossible to perceive in her the slightest trace of that inexperienced young princess, who, when stepping at once from her convent into the
great

great and dazzling world, received impressions the most lively from every new object, and was ignorant of the art of concealing what she felt. Besides, the princess of Ratibor had instilled into her a certain respect for her own dignity; which diminished the affability she naturally possessed, and gave her at length a less engaging, though a more stately demeanour. No one, however, was more amiable to those who pleased her. Ida had this good fortune formerly; but the impression had since been completely effaced; and the empress beheld nothing in her now, but a statuary's daughter, who effected to be more handsome, and more attractive, than befitted her station. Beside, the character of Ida had sunk on another account in the opinion of Sophia. Wincellaus, in his usual manner, had told the empress, with an authoritative tone, that it was his desire Ida might be admitted into the number of the ladies of her court. Sophia, as frequently happened, asked the cause of this preferment, and the emperor took special care not to say: because her mother has given me two hundred and fifty crowns of gold: but coldly assigned for reason his own will, and the young woman's beauty. To this declaration Sophia answered only by her silence; and the governess of the house-

household by a look of disdain, as she turned her face towards the empress.

“Must I compliment your majesty, on
“the brilliant acquisition you have just
“made?” said the princess of Ratibor to Sophia, as soon as they were alone.—The empress was silent.—“Really, continued
“the princess, if the daughters of plebeians
“are to be admitted amongst our young
“ladies of quality, our court will soon become an admirable pattern for others.
“However, there is no effect without a
“cause: they say this Munster’s daughter
“is handsome, and Susanna grows uglier
“every day: now, a trifling exchange
“ought of course to be allowable in the
“virtuous chief of the German empire.”

It will be presumed from this speech, that the governess of the household was permitted to talk with great freedom to Sophia: in fact, being the sole confidant of the unfortunate wife of Wincellaus, she had liberty to say whatever she pleased. She continued, therefore, her malicious discourse, in terms so adroitly chosen to irritate the empress’s mind, that we need not wonder at the reception of Ida.

The daughter of Munster was not long in perceiving, that she must here learn to bear looks to which she had never been accustomed: but she endeavoured to persuade herself, that it was the style of the

court; and her modesty led her to ascribe solely to her want of birth the little affronts she received, and from which she found her companions exempt. This did not prevent her from sometimes asking herself, why, if she were not to be treated with greater kindness, she had been drawn from her original obscurity. Yet her native candour always concluded with making her excuse the ill-treatment she experienced, and endeavour to bear it with patience.

Though no one seemed to notice the citizen's daughter, every eye was fixed upon her. The men whispered to one another: "How handsome, how beautiful she is!" while the women sought to find defects in her who had been introduced into their circle, in violation of established usage.

Amongst all the ladies of the court, however, there was not one who observed her with so much attention as the princess of Ratibor. She assiduously watched for some favourable circumstance, that might serve to confirm the opinion she had instilled into Sophia. Fruitless assiduity! The young Munster, as she was called in derision, conducted herself in a manner so irreproachable, that she had no reason to fear having the whole universe to witness her actions. She executed the duties of her office with the strictest propriety, spent her leisure

leisure hours in her apartment with her attendant, visited her parents on those days when she was permitted so to do, and behaved with so much prudence when there was a ball or entertainment at the palace, that the most envenomed malignity could find no unguarded place against which to direct its arrows. To this may be added, that the emperor paid not the smallest attention to her, which totally overthrew the disadvantageous ideas, which the princess of Ratibor had wished Sophia to conceive of her. Winceflaus, as we have seen, was no woman-hater: but the line of beauty that captivated him was not of that dignified species that adorned the young Munster. The charms of Susanna were the model most suited to his taste.

The governess of the household, finding herself baffled in her attempts, to lay hold of the conduct of our young damsel, was compelled to be silent. Sophia, therefore, heard no longer any thing spoken to her prejudice; and, seeing her daily adorned with every grace, she felt her affection for her imperceptibly revive. Ida was infinitely superior to the rest of the maids of honour, whom her modesty would not suffer her to style her companions; yet, who appeared by her side, in spite of their haughty and contemptuous carriage, no better than her servants. These young ladies

ladies took infinite pains to outvie each other, and to catch a passing look or a smile from their princefs, a circumstance which contributed not a little to place them in an unfavourable point of view, when compared with the artless simplicity of the charming Munster.

At first it was much for the daughter of a plebeian not to be treated with disdain by her mistress; but on the contrary, to be viewed with some degree of complacency. And now nothing was wanting but some lucky incident to change this disposition into kindness.

One day Sophia's time hung heavily on her hands; a circumstance, it may be presumed, which frequently happens to great princefles. We are not informed how she spent those moments in which she experienced not this distressing sensation: but on the day of which we are speaking, all the ordinary subjects of conversation had been exhausted. There was nothing new to say on the subject of Susanna; for the emperor, hoping that his wife would soon make him a father, had consented to remove his mistress for a time, by sending her to Conradsbourg: and no one durst venture to give the empress any fresh cause of discontent, before the tottering throne of Wincesslaus was established by an heir.

On

On the evening of this day, the empress, not knowing how to dispel the wearisomeness she felt, bethought herself of assembling all the ladies of the court, and proposing a prize for her who could invent any means of making the time seem less tedious.

Instantly every body was in motion. All were desirous of giving proof of their ability. Singers, dancers, and story-tellers, presented themselves: but, vain all their efforts! either they performed their parts ill, or the demon of languor, that tormented Sophia, was so stubborn, that he appeared determined not to be vanquished. "Ah, cease, cease!" cried Sophia: "what unmusical sounds! what barbarous steps! what drowsy homilies! how unfortunate I am, to have nothing but such untoward creatures about me!"

"Let not your majesty despair:" said the malicious princess of Ratibor: "have we not young Munster? Look where she stands, as idle and unconcerned as if she had nothing to do with the service of the empress: yet, no doubt, she is capable of eclipsing, by her talents, all the young ladies of the court. Come forward, miss:" continued she, in a tone of disdain: "Speak; what talents have you with which to amuse the empress? You are not to suppose, that a

“place like your’s is to be filled by a person that is good for nothing.”

Unquestionably the design of the artful Ratibor was so to abash the innocent Ida, by this unexpected invitation, delivered too in such a style, that it would be impossible for her to display any talents she might possess. But her expectations were baulked.

—“I play on the harp:” answered Ida, bowing, “and I would long since have gone for my instrument, if I had dared to touch its strings before persons so much better skilled, or if I could have hoped . . .”

“O, for Heaven’s sake, fetch it, child,” exclaimed Sophia, interrupting her: “I doat on the harp!” Ida withdrew, and the princess of Ratibor seized that opportunity to acquaint the empress, that she was just going to take her daughter from the convent, and she had been assured that she played in a very superior style on the harp.

Ida soon entered with her instrument, placed herself opposite Sophia, played a short prelude, that announced a consummate mistress in the art, and then began . . . God of harmony, didst thou inspire her with the thought? . . . That very song, which made so profound an impression on the empress the day of her nuptials.

Sophia scarcely breathed. Her eyes were fixed on the enchanting musician, who, standing

standing before her, seemed to behold nothing but the strings of the harp, unless when occasionally her fine eyes were turned on the empress to give more expression to her words. Young Munster had finished her song, and Sophia yet gazed on her with rapture, as if she still heard the melodious notes, when, approaching her mistress, and dropping on one knee, she took from her head her coronet of flowers, and laid it at the empress's feet, conformably to the words of the song.

"Divine, enchanting girl!" cried Sophia, at the same time throwing her arm round the neck of Ida, and embracing her: "what sensations have you awakened in my breast! . . . Rife, my child," continued she, after a moment's silence, and perceiving the scrutinizing eyes of the princess of Ratibor fixed on her: "rise, you have played and sung excellently." The look and voice of the empress in pronouncing these words, did not express the same affection with which she embraced her. Ida, however, took courage to kiss her hand which she held out to her, and then withdrew to a distant part of the room.

Had young Munster possessed the profoundest knowledge of the human heart, she could not have selected any thing better calculated to gain that of the empress, than the piece which she sung. The sensations

of Sophia on her wedding-day, when the young women made their appearance, must have been extremely delicious, for the bare remembrance of it to be capable of giving her so much pleasure. But this is by no means extraordinary. Who is there, that has not imagined, when some past event of his life has been recalled to his memory by certain sounds, or appearances, that he has felt anew what he felt before; and, if the sensation be pleasurable, the person who recalls it excites irresistibly our affection.

Sophia had risen from her seat, and was wiping the tears from her eyes at a window. The young ladies examined, with envious looks, the too interesting Ida, who rested tranquilly on her harp. The mistress of the robes then remarked, that it was late; and her majesty having need of repose, that the ladies might withdraw. Sophia gave a nod of approbation, and they retired.

CHAPTER XV.

THE princefs of Ratibor would undoubtedly have been pleased if our young musician had been overcome with the honour of playing before an empress, as hath happened to many a musical performer at
other

other courts, and had been obliged to withdraw before she had touched a string of the instrument: but either it was more easy to play on the harp before the empress of Bohemia, than before any other potentate, or Ida was too secure of her abilities, and too much accustomed to the presence of a sovereign to be in danger of fainting. Thus she left the imperial apartment with her usual tranquillity.

“What a tiresome frigid creature that girl is!” said the princess of Ratibor, when she found herself alone with the empress: any one else would have been intoxicated with so many marks of kindness; but she . . .”

“I observed her eyes filled with tears.”

“O yes; she can weep! . . .”

“I beg Ratibor,” said Sophia coldly, and interrupting her: “that you will not thus strive to embitter every thing that gives me pleasure.”

A declaration like this would have been sufficient of itself to exasperate to the highest pitch the malice of Ida’s enemy; but a circumstance happened the next day which was still more provoking.

Ida had been called into Sophia’s chamber.—“Dear Munster,” said the empress to her: “you made me yesterday pass a delicious hour. While I listened to you I forgot every thing else, even the prize

“ I had promised; a prize which you
“ gained with the utmost facility, and
“ which I still owe you. Receive, then,
“ this riband, which attaches you more
“ particularly to my service:” adding,
with a smile, “ for you know, I must not
“ offer you jewels, you have already re-
“ fused them.”

This present was a blue velvet riband, which was worn across the body from right to left, fastened on the shoulder with a large silk bow, and only given to young ladies of the first distinction at court. Ida received it on her knees, and the princess of Ratibor was ordered to decorate her with it.

Young Munster's astonishment was extreme: such excessive kindness rendered her speechless: yet we may venture to affirm that, she was far from seeing all its possible consequences as clearly as the princess of Ratibor. She was of that happy age when the difference does not appear great between a riband of honour, a simple knot for the hair, or a rose fresh gathered, as they all serve equally for ornament. The present of Sophia, however, bore a superior value in the eyes of Ida, because of the hand that bestowed it; and she expressed the warmest gratitude. The princess of Ratibor looked, on this occasion, much as did the Persian courtier of old,

old, when obliged to attend on the sage Hebrew, and proclaim him the man whom the king delighteth to honour: at last, however, her disdainful countenance assumed a certain malicious smile, impossible to have been deciphered by a girl so innocent and unexperienced as Ida. Having thanked the empress, Ida made a graceful obeisance to the princess of Ratibor, who deigned to honour her with an embrace. "That Munster," said the princess of Ratibor to Sophia, the instant Ida departed, "is a charming creature, it must be owned; what a pity that she is the daughter of a plebeian!"

The eyes of all the maids of honour were enviously fixed on Ida's blue riband. With regret they saw her wear a badge of honour granted only to three or four of them. But this the young favourite did not perceive: she accosted them with her usual affability, without appearing in the least vain of the distinction she had received; and expected with impatience the evening, when she would have permission to visit her parents. She longed to show herself to them with her new decoration, sure that her mother at least would be delighted. She conjectured rightly: her mother alone was rejoiced. Munster looked at her with a troubled and pensive countenance

nance, and renewed his exhortations to her to be always watchful over herself, and faithful to the engagements into which she had entered.

From the day that Ida received this first mark of her sovereign's favour, she appeared to be every moment treated with more esteem. She was called more frequently than her companions into the presence of Sophia, who liked better to be waited on by her than by any one else. Not an evening passed without her being obliged to repair with her harp to the empress's closet, and exercise her talents to amuse her mistress. Was she more happy on this account? She endeavoured at least to persuade herself so, because she perceived herself necessary to the happiness of another; but at bottom, in consequence of the continual restraint in which she lived, she regretted those tranquil moments she before enjoyed in her own apartment, the many delightful evenings she spent with her parents, and the time when she had leisure to trace in imagination some past events of her life. These innocent pleasures became daily more rare.

The favour she enjoyed with the empress, whom she now scarcely ever quitted, prevented her not from experiencing a thousand little disagreeable circumstances. Sophia was not always cheerful; and did not

not always, when she spoke to her, call her her dear Munster.

Ida perceived herself incessantly the butt of the envenomed shafts of calumny. At one time it was said, that she had been seen in places, in which it became not the empress's maids of honour to appear; at another, that she had laughed at church; now she was accused of having spoken disrespectfully of some lady at court; then, of having talked too freely with some young nobleman at a ball. But the innocence of her, of whom these tales were told to Sophia, so completely destroyed their effect, that she was seldom influenced by them more than a few minutes; and her attachment for young Munster generally increased after these transient clouds of displeasure. During their continuance the governess of the household was seen to smile more graciously on Sophia than ever.

The princess of Ratibor had hoped, that Ida would experience the common fate of those who breathe the air of courts; namely, that her credit would sink as speedily as it had been raised, and by means as simple. Finding herself mistaken, she reckoned on another expedient, which she deemed infallible. This consisted in the introduction of a new person at court. Novelty has so many attractions that it makes us easily

easily forget what we have long had in possession, and Ida had now been the favourite of Sophia for nearly a month.

The young Image daughter of the princess of Ratibor was the expected stranger. She had been educated in a convent; wonders were reputed of her; and her too credulous mother let slip no opportunity of sounding her praise, and repeating what was written of her by the nuns. She triumphed before hand at the idea of shortly seeing this detested Munderchipsed by her daughter: sometimes, indeed, a victory over a girl of so little importance seemed to her too trifling, and she endeavoured to find some means of obtaining more signal satisfaction for the affronts she had occasioned her.

Image appeared; and, as the impression she made on her mother was not very extraordinary, it is easy to guess what effect she produced on other less interested spectators. She was presented, and very well received. Immediately was given her, on account of her rank, the blueriband, which Ida obtained only as a recompense for her services; and though she had expected more particular marks of favour, she was obliged to be contented with what she received, and was left at full liberty to join her new companions, without once being inquired after during the rest of the evening.

evening. The next day, however, there was much talk at court of the young princess of Ratibor. She was said to be handsome, and it was added, that she appeared to be of an amiable disposition. Her good qualities were so much insisted on, and her praises repeated with such ostentation, that, instead of persuading people of her merit, it only excited doubt: and of consequence the scheme produced no effect.

The princess of Ratibor had thus the mortification to find her projects once more abortive; and she soon lost all desire of leaving Imago in the service of the empress, where she had the terrible misfortune beside of having for a companion the daughter of a citizen. Her mother then thought of marrying her. Imago was not ugly; her parents could give her a considerable fortune; and Ratibor hoped, that, with the assistance of some artful coadjutors, she might effect her marriage with a young Italian prince, who was expected at court. Meanwhile, that the time might not be thrown away, she set herself to examine the talents of Imago, in order to judge whether they were superior to her beauty. She found, that they might suffice, perhaps, to shine in a convent; but that in the world they would be estimated at a very low rate. Of the things she had acquired some were necessary to be unlearned;

learned; others, to be of any value, had great need of improvement; and she wanted many of those agreeable talents which cannot be dispensed with in good company; so that her education was actually to begin again. Thus, to be able to figure without disgrace, in a circle of any politeness, this poor young creature was obliged to betake herself anew to her studies, which she imagined she had relinquished for ever. Her gaiety, which perhaps would have rendered her amiable, was destroyed by this constraint: at home she was fretful and passionate; at court she was absent; and in a little time jealousy, uniting with her useless endeavours to acquire perfection, rendered her, who might have been agreeable had she not attempted to go beyond her sphere, the most insupportable being in the world.

The princefs of Ratibor observed this with regret: she trembled when any one looked at, or conversed with her daughter, and sedulously avoided every occasion of recalling to mind the talents of Imago, of which she had formerly boasted. One day, however, shortly after Imago's appearance at court, the conversation turned on music, and particularly on the harp. Sophia then recollecting, that the skill of Imago on that instrument had once been brought into comparison with the exquisite performance

mance of Ida, desired a specimen of her talents. The young musicians were obliged to play in competition; and the comparison was so much to the disadvantage of Imago, that the mother was vexed at her former gasconade, and could only offer in excuse, that so insignificant an accomplishment was unworthy the study of a princess, and suited only a person who perhaps intended to make it her profession.

Ida was extremely mortified, not only at the suggestion that she designed to embrace the occupation of a musician, an occupation held in those days in disrepute; but also at having been the unwilling instrument of humbling a young person by whom she had never been offended. On seeing the young Munster with her eyes cast on the ground one might have supposed that she was the vanquished party: nor was it possible for her to enjoy with cordiality the applauses she received. This incident led her to seek less than ever to exhibit her talents; and as Imago did not provoke her to it, they lived on good terms together.

After the various artifices which the princess of Ratibor had employed to crush the young Munster, it was reasonable to presume, from her known disposition, that she had conceived against Ida the most inveterate hatred: but the reverse appeared in

in her conduct. She seemed entirely devoted to her, engaged her daughter in conversation with her, invited her sometimes to dinner at her house, and at length requested her to give Imago some lessons on the harp: a request with which she complied as readily, as she refused with firmness a very handsome present offered her on that account.

Thus Ida spent as much of her time at Ratibor house, as her duty at court would permit. She exerted herself to improve the talents of Imago, endeavoured sometimes to correct her temper, and sought to inspire her with sentiments suitable to her rank. But every block of marble is not calculated for the statue of a god. Imago remained as she was, and gave Ida, to understand that she had much rather see her as a friend, than as an instructress.

A close intimacy was soon formed between the two young women. There were moments when the difference of their rank was entirely forgotten: they walked, they played, they bathed together, and it sometimes happened, that they slept in the same bed. Mrs. Munster was delighted with a connexion so honourable, when Ida mentioned it in one of her visits to her parents; but her husband shook his head, and recited the fable of the earthen vessel and the brass pot, which he had learned

of

of a monk.—“Familiarities of this kind,” said he, “have some concealed motive. We are led ingenuously to disclose our thoughts, and have afterwards frequently reason to repent it. I am much mistaken, if the princess have not already made some attempt to learn your little secrets.”

“Secrets, my dear father!” said Ida, laughing: “I have none.”

Munster held up his finger, and named Herman.

“It is true,” replied Ida, with a blush, “Imago has sometimes bantered me on that name; and I must certainly have uttered it in a dream, for awake it has never escaped my lips.”

“I would not have you mention it either sleeping or waking,” said Munster, who could not help smiling at the simplicity of her answer.

“I remember, however,” said Ida, “a trick which the princess played me, and with which I was not at all pleased. You know the present which the empress made me of a lock of her hair. Since I have resided at court, I have avoided wearing it publicly, as such an ornament would have occasioned too much talk: but I esteem that early pledge of my sovereign’s favour a thousand times more than the most costly
“jewels,

“ jewels, and it is never out of my bosom,
“ except when I bathe. On one of these
“ occasions, the princess took it from me
“ secretly : I missed it : a little quarrel
“ arose between us : she would not con-
“ fess the theft : at last I perceived the
“ gold net-work hanging from her neck,
“ and I pulled it out of her bosom. Still
“ she would not let it go, but held it in
“ play, till I had related the manner of
“ my obtaining it. She seemed to me to
“ have been already informed of this event
“ by her mother, who, as I remembered
“ was present ; and she was particularly
“ pressing to know what I intended to do
“ with such a singular ornament. Upon
“ this I laughed, and turned the matter
“ into a jest. I believe, answered I, that
“ as long as I shall wear a part of the em-
“ press next my heart, she will always
“ continue to love me.

• “ A very extraordinary answer,” re-
plied Munster, shaking his head. “ Be
“ prudent my child, and avoid too great
“ familiarity with persons who, I have no
“ doubt, mean you ill.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE prince, whom the mother of Imago had in view for her daughter, at length arrived at Prague. He was a wealthy lord, of great expectations, of the house of Visconti. Many steps had already been taken: he had been told of Imago's beauty, with the usual exaggerations; but in all probability he made a deeper impression upon her, than she upon him, for he saw her by the side of Ida. Who indeed, in presence of the latter, could have any hopes of making a conquest? and particularly the princess of Ratibor, who was inferior to the generality of young women who had any pretensions to beauty. Accordingly the eyes of the prince were turned incessantly towards Ida. In vain was he assiduously informed of her want of birth. In spite of this circumstance his intended could with difficulty obtain from him a few careless glances, while he gazed on young Munster with such rapture, that she was disconcerted, and obliged to retire.

From that moment she was no longer invited to Ratibor house; and Imago seemed not to know her former friend, when she met her at court. The prince repeated

ed his visits, but without finding her whom he sought. At length he saw her at court, and was as little cautious to conceal the impression she had made on him, as the first time he beheld her. To no purpose was he again told, that this extraordinary girl was no more than Ida Munster: the name did not appear to operate on him the effect that was expected. He continued to admire her, and sought opportunities of speaking to her. In this however he succeeded not. Ida carefully avoided him, for she had remarked the passion with which she had inspired him, and was resolved not to listen to the proposals of a prince, to the injury of her friend, and the disparagement of Herman. The young Italian remained no longer at Prague than was necessary to convince him, that he had nothing to hope from her whom he loved. At his departure he neglected even taking leave of the princess of Ratibor; and he thought not for a moment during his residence at the court of Winceslaus, of the honour intended him, by marrying him there.

Thus the simple Imago, and her haughty mother, once more saw their hopes disappointed. They had carried matters so far, as already to have received the congratulations of the court on the projected match, which

which augmented their humiliation on finding it broken off.

All the disgrace of this failure was thrown on the innocent Ida, who was no otherwise to blame, than in possessing more beauty than Imago, and the majority of her companions. Ratibor and her daughter could now scarcely conceal the rage with which they were inflamed; and Ida would have been terrified to death, could suspicion have entered into her heart, pure and exempt as it was from treachery.

They, whom she supposed to be her parents, felt very differently on this subject. Both were persuaded, that it would be imprudent to instil fear into her mind; but her perilous situation was often the subject of their discourse till midnight, and they each separately took in secret, the steps they conceived most proper to secure the life and honour of her who was so dear to them.

Mrs. Munster was much more alarmed on this occasion than her husband. She had a very bad opinion of the prince of Ratibor, and all his illustrious house; and she related a hundred instances, one more terrible than another, in order to shew, that they who had the misfortune to displease any of the family, frequently disappeared on a sudden, without any person knowing what became of them. Might not the unfortunate Ida experience the same

same fate? And, in a danger so eminent, what could remove the apprehensions of a nurse, who had for her the sentiments of the tenderest mother?

Probably many of the stories which so much disquieted Mrs. Munster, were of the nature of fairy tales, which were firmly believed in the days of which we are writing. But alas! the terrible phantoms of the imagination have, over weak minds, as much sway as realities; with this advantage on their side, that the means, commonly chosen to combat them, are calculated rather to augment than diminish the terror they occasion. The anxiety of Munster and his wife, was increased by a report that had prevailed, and which was shortly confirmed from the mouth of Ida, that the emperor's journey into Westphalia, which had been long talked of, was soon to take place, and consequently Ida, if she followed the court, would be exposed incessantly, and without resource, to the malice of her enemy.

The first thought of Munster, when he heard this news, was to take home his supposed daughter. To this his wife heartily consented; and Ida, who had never any other will, than the will of those whom she believed to be her parents, made no opposition.

It

It was proposed to the empress; but the empress was now so strongly attached to her charming attendant, that it was impossible to think of a separation; and the request of Munster, which he made in person, was flatly refused. . . . "I thank you, good old gentleman, for having left me your daughter so long:" said Sophia, with her wonted affability: "but if you take her from me now, I shall scarcely be obliged to you for the past; since the time draws nigh, when her affectionate cares and charming vivacity will be indispensable; when I shall doubly want her enchanting conversation, and her skill on the harp, to drive from me the genius of melancholy. Besides, you will deprive her of the honour of singing to your future prince, the first song he will hear in his cradle."

This was attacking old Munster on his weak side. He found, that it was in vain to think of Ida's return; and, as nothing could remove his uneasiness, if he did not hear of her every day, he formed a resolution, of which we shall hereafter have occasion to speak, while his wife secretly took another. In fact, she employed the two hundred gold crowns, the remains of their buried treasure, in the execution of a scheme she had formed, and she delay-

ed not taking the necessary steps with her usual precipitancy.

The day fixed for the emperor's departure arrived: but certain events happened, unconnected with our history, that obliged him to remain some time longer at Prague, and to let the empress depart without him *.

The persons who were to accompany the empress, were assembled in the audience chamber to take leave, when a circumstance occurred, that surprised every one, not excepting her whom it immediately concerned. Wincellaus had already spoken to the persons of most importance in the suite of the empress, and those of less consequence were, according to custom, to receive only a general mark of notice, when Ida, who was at that time amongst the crowd, was ordered to be called to him.

“Are you Ida Munster?” asked he.

Being answered in the affirmative, a private secretary, on a motion from the emperor, put into her hands a large parchment patent, from which hung the imperial seal. Ida blushed, and appeared disconcerted.

* The motives of this journey seem to be in general very obscure; nor can we find any satisfactory account of it in contemporary historians.

“It

“It is impossible,” said Wincellaus, “that the favour I grant you, should appear more extraordinary to you, than it does to myself: but one of my subjects has thought fit to solicit it, and I love them too well, to refuse to the humblest of them, any thing that is practicable. Go: and be assured of my protection.”

Ida retired with amazement. Every body crowded round her, eager to know the contents of this mysterious patent: but she ran with it to the empress, who gave it to a chamberlain to read, which he did, to the whole assembled court. The following were its contents:

“We, Wincellaus, &c. take thee, Ida Munster, under our imperial protection; and hereby declare all those responsible for thy life and honour, on whom shall fall the least suspicion of having attempted them. Moreover we grant thee the privilege of not being condemned to death, but by ourself in person, and of not being arraigned for any misdemeanor, except before our own immediate tribunal, or those deputed to hold our place in the criminal court, &c.”

Who does not perceive, in this proceeding, the affectionate precaution of Mrs. Munster? she was desirous of omitting
H 2 nothing

nothing for the security of her Ida, and in consequence resolved to purchase her the immediate protection of the emperor. Wincefflaus, always ready to grant what was asked him in so becoming a manner, had directed, half-drunk perhaps, the immediate execution of this patent, which could not but appear mysterious to all the world, and which proved more detrimental than useful to her, for whom it was obtained.

The persons who were present at its recital, beheld young Munster with looks of astonishment and contempt: and it was unanimously agreed, that there must be something extraordinary in her situation, for such precaution to be necessary. In the common course of things, innocence, it was said, needed no protector but itself: nor did it appear that any injurious suspicions had been entertained of Ida, or any intention of prosecuting her in any court.

Young Munster was not the last to feel that this singular protection had a very unfavourable appearance. Without regarding therefore, what she heard whispered on all sides, she approached the empress, and asked her permission, humbly to return the monarch the patent he had granted her. "I ask no other security," added she, "than that which every one has a right to expect under an equitable
"ble

“ble prince: I desire no favours, but
“what I shall be found to merit from the
“goodness of my mistress.”

“No, no,” cried Sophia, who saw the
affair in a very different light, from the
rest of those who were present: “No,
“my child, I will keep this instrument
“for you: and, if it serve for nothing
“else, it will at least prove to your de-
“scendants, that you were an object
“worthy the particular protection of your
“prince.”

This adventure became a general sub-
ject of conversation, and arrived at the
ears of Munster, before Ida had an oppor-
tunity of acquainting him with it. He
readily guessed at the author, and had a
very serious conversation with his wife, on
the singular means which her attachment
for her daughter induced her to employ.
Mrs. Munster confessed, that she had soli-
cited the emperor's protection for Ida:
but declared at the same time, that she had
never thought of asking a written assurance
of his promise, and much less a security
in the form of a patent. Munster, who
had seldom found his wife in a lie, believ-
ed her, and supposed the singularity to be
of the number of those inconsiderate ac-
tions, that the fumes of wine so often
caused Wincellaus to commit. For our-
selves, we are inclined to consider the cir-

cumstance rather as a trick of dame fortune, who meant to produce from it the most extraordinary adventures.

CHAPTER XVII.

IDA went to take leave of her parents. Her mother burst into tears; but her father showed more firmness, and spoke of the pleasure of soon seeing her again.

After affectionately bidding each other adieu, they parted. . . . The reader will pardon me, if, in this part of my history, I speak a little obscurely of time and place. The want of sufficient documents, must be my excuse.

When the empress arrived at the end of her journey, the time of her delivery approached. Sicknefs, or some other reason, prevented the emperor from being present at this grand event: but he had taken care, that, in his absence, every thing should be conducted in a manner suitable to the birth of an heir to his throne. The Bohemians complained, that this ill-timed journey would deprive them of the happiness of hearing the first cries of their future monarch. By way of consolation, they were permitted to send a deputation
of

of the most considerable persons among them, to be present at the delivery of the empress, and assist at the baptism of their young sovereign; for a prince it must be at all events. No person besides was invited to the ceremony, except the duke of Bavaria, father of Sophia, and the count of Wirtemberg, her godfather.

These noblemen, and the loyal Bohemians, arrived at the day appointed, and every thing was ready for celebrating the grand festival, but the principal personage, the heir of Winceßlaus, on whose account it was made.

The wished for moment, however, seemed daily to become more distant; the empress was attacked with a severe distemper, that reduced her to the last extremity. All the country put up prayers for her recovery; and, at length, she was delivered of a dead daughter.

I know not whether in those days it was rare for sanguine expectations to be disappointed, or whether princes at least, were exempt from such a misfortune; but certain it is, that this sad accident spread such alarm, that one would have supposed nothing similar to it had ever happened on the face of the earth. The persons who interested themselves in the affair, and Sophia was so beloved by the people, that no one was indifferent where she was con-

cerned, were divided chiefly into two parties. One attempted to discover the presages of this event, the other to conjecture what had been its cause, while few thought of the consequences it might produce.

The art of interpreting presages of futurity, was then a prime article of faith; and he would have been in an awkward predicament, who should have ventured to contradict those who attributed to the still-born princess, all the comets and extraordinary meteors that had been seen in the firmament for ten years before. They who set themselves to investigate the cause, of what had disappointed the hopes of a whole people, were still less disposed to be jested with; and in their eyes it would have been a crime but to suspect, that the misfortune was owing to a long journey, undertaken in an advanced state of pregnancy, the unskilfulness of the physicians, or the last fit of rage into which the empress was thrown, when she learnt, by letters from Prague, that Susanna, whom she had been assured by Wincesslaus he had finally dismissed, had again made her appearance, publicly filled her place, occupied her apartments, and framed projects on her approaching death, which she trusted would be the consequence of her situation.

Reasons of this sort were too trivial in the opinion of our sages. Their inquiries
went

went much farther. According to them, nothing but sorcery could have operated this event. It was necessary, that the arm of justice should put a speedy stop to the evil, that it might not extend farther, and reach even the sacred person of Sophia, who was still between life and death. All the empress's household were imprisoned, even to the princess of Ratibor, Ida alone excepted. She was left undisturbed in her apartment, and had nothing to complain of, except that she was not permitted to attend her beloved mistress, who every moment called for her in vain, and declared, that, without her dear Ida, she could neither live nor die.

The examinations were taken with speed and rigour before the duke of Bavaria, and the count of Wirtemberg, who had been too much habituated to the sufferings of others and were too good christians, to shew any mercy in an affair of witchcraft. Strict, however, as were the examinations, all the ladies who had been taken up, were dismissed on the first interrogatory. Even the princess of Ratibor received not the slightest reprimand, for having been so negligent of the empress's safety as to permit the delivery of the letter, of which we have spoken above. It was known that such a letter had been received; it was known, that, immediately on reading it, Sophia had

fallen into a swoon, which was followed by convulsions ; and that from that moment to her delivery she had continued in extreme danger : but to this no attention was paid ; they sought only to discover the supernatural means, which must have been employed to deprive Sophia and her infant of life ; and of these the ladies of the empress had been found to be perfectly innocent.

Ida sincerely pitied her unfortunate companions for having incurred the slightest suspicion of a practice so detestable, in which she, like the rest of her contemporaries, had the firmest belief. Such a suspicion she thought she could not herself have survived an instant. She considered herself happy to have been the only one excepted ; and hoped, that she should soon be permitted to see her dear mistress, when she learnt, that the princess of Ratibor and the other ladies had been set at liberty, and were at present engaged in their former employments about her person.

One morning as she was dressing, in order to be ready if the empress should send for her, one of her women entered with looks of horror and despair, holding in her hand a paper, which she seemed desirous of giving her ; but scarcely had she taken two steps in the room, when she tottered and fell senseless on the floor. Ida
ran

ran to her assistance, and perceived her name on the paper, which lay on the ground. Curiosity got the better of her compassion, and she read what follows. But no, she read it not, for at the second line she fell by the side of her servant.

Judge, reader, whether she had not reason to despair.

“ TO IDA MUNSTER.

“ Ida Munster ! sorceress ! accused of murder, of high treason ! appear ! We, the secret avengers of the Eternal, cite thee within three days before the tribunal of God ! appear ! appear ! ”

“ Good Heavens ! ” exclaimed Ida, when by the assistance of her women she was brought to herself : “ did I see clearly ? give me that note. ” She read it ; it fell from her hands : and pale and trembling she sat down on her chair.

The servant then related, that in the morning she had found the parchment nailed to the door that led to Ida’s apartment : at first she paid no attention to it, because she could not read ; but the people, who were assembled in crowds, informed her of its contents, and ordered her, with threats, to carry it to the person to whom it was addressed.

Ida listened to her tale, half dead with fear, and scarcely knowing what she heard.

Had

Had she been more collected she would have perceived, in the looks of those about her, an indignation and contempt, which would have appeared to her extraordinary from persons by whom she had been incessantly flattered.

“O God! What have I done? and what am I now to do?” cried Ida, clasping her hands, and lifting her eyes to Heaven.

“What you have done,” said her women, “is best known to yourself: and as to what you have now to do it is not for us to advise. We must instantly leave you, lest the vengeance of Heaven should pursue us also.”

“And will you too abandon me?” said Ida to the young woman who had brought her the billet, and who, affected by her situation, had thrown herself at her feet, and watered them with her tears.

“Tell me in what I can serve you, and I will stay.”

“Run to the princess of Ratibor, and tell her tell her only yet tell her all: describe to her my distressed situation: let her advise me what to do. God only knows what has brought on me this calamity.”

The young woman went, and soon returned, bringing back for answer, that the princess knew no such person.

In like manner Ida sent to several other ladies of the court and equally to no purpose. She then recollected the duke of Bavaria, and the count of Wirtemberg, who had always shewn a regard for her. To them she sent also, and received for answer, that she must have recourse to God, if her conscience were pure: as to advice, they could give her none, except that of not failing to appear in compliance with the citation, as, at any rate, her life was at stake.

“Appear!” said Ida: “where must I appear? Did you ask where the secret tribunal is held?”

The girl was silent.

“My life too at stake!” exclaimed the unfortunate Ida, after a long, and gloomy silence. “Heavens! what have I done? Am I not innocent?”

“God send you may be:” answered her woman, sobbing.

“Yes, I call Heaven to witness that I am. I swear it by him who lives for ever.”

Having remained some time on her knees, covering her face with her hands, and seemingly in prayer, she at length arose, and continued thus:—“What said the count of Wirtemberg? Was it not that I must seek consolation from God? Be it so. God has already comforted
“me;

“ me; he will comfort me still more by
“ the mouth of his ministers. Give me
“ my hood: I will go to church, and
“ confess myself. The reverend father
“ John will tell me what to do.”

“ Oh! do not run such a risk: the
“ people are excited against you, and may
“ do you some mischief.”

“ Give me my hood: I may risk every
“ thing, for what have I to lose?”

“ No doubt it will be useless for me to
“ attend you.”

“ Do as you please.”

Ida set off, without once looking round her. She muffled herself up as much as possible in her hood, that she might not be known. At every corner she heard her name coupled with imprecations. The people seemed better informed than herself of what she was accused. The appellations of wretch, criminal, forceress, passed from mouth to mouth without further explanation: at last she gathered from some expressions that dropped from a company walking before her, that the crime with which she was charged was committed against her dearest friend, her adored Sophia. More than once she was near sinking to the earth, her legs failed her, and she was obliged to lean against the wall.

When she arrived at the church, where she sought counsel and consolation from
the

the only friend she had left, her confessor, night was advancing. Silently she passed along the gloomy cloisters of the hallowed fane, and placed herself in an obscure corner, to wait for father John. Whether this father John were the famous confessor of the empress, St. John Nepomucenes, whose name is still so celebrated for his discretion, our memoirs do not inform us: St. Nepomucenes himself, however, could not have given more striking proofs of his love of taciturnity, than did our father John, when this afflicted sinner, or saint let us rather call her, laid open to his view the inmost recesses of her heart.

She concealed nothing from him; she wept, she sighed, she asked his counsel . . . and still he was silent. She urgently implored him to bestow on her one word, one simple word of consolation. After a long pause, he ventured to say: "Go; clear yourself from the crime of which you are accused, and then I will grant you absolution."

"But what must I do? I am cited to the bar of justice by I know not whom; I am to make my appearance I know not where."

"Appear."

"And who will be my judges?"

"Those terrible unknown mortals, who render justice in secret."

"Where

“Where do they assemble?”

“Every where, and no where.”

Ida, bathed in tears, ceased to question this flinty-hearted priest; and he rose to go away.

“Have pity on me! have pity on me!” cried she, holding him by his gown: “it is now night: grant me an *asylum* till the morning in this convent, or give me at least a guide to conduct me home in safety.”

“The holy sisters who dwell here will not receive you, nor will any one accompany you.”

Ida covered her face with her hood, and wept afresh. A moment after she looked round, and found herself alone. The great lamp suspended from the centre of the church shed a feeble light. Rising, she walked with trembling steps through the windings of the sacred vaults, and by the least frequented streets of the city, till she arrived at her own habitation. She no longer wept; a kind of torpid insensibility had seized her faculties. She called to her servant to bring a light: no one answered. She entered the anti-chamber, and the apartments of her women: they were empty.—

“I am totally abandoned, then:” said she, as she entered her own chamber. “Heavens! how have I deserved this fate? Is there no difference between accusation
“and

“ and conviction ? Am I in reality guilty ?
“ They say, that it is possible to sin with-
“ out knowing it. Yes, yes : it must be
“ so, and I am certainly a guilty wretch,
“ since every one considers me as such,
“ and the holy father John has refused
“ me absolution.”

Ida was in that terrible situation, from which there is but a step to madness and despair, when she heard an indistinct noise in the anti-chamber. The door opened, and some one called her by her name.

“ Who is there ? and what is thy errand ? said she, in a voice more of alarm and horror than of anger.

“ Ida ! my poor, unhappy Ida ! ” continued the stranger, in accents of the most tender affection.

Ida rose from the floor on which she was lying. The figure, which was then discernible, by means of a lantern it carried, approached nearer.

“ Who art thou ? Art thou one of those terrible and unknown beings, who render justice in secret ? ”

“ Do you then no longer know me ?
“ Do you not know your father ? ” cried the person who entered ; and saying this, he rendered the light of his lantern more vivid, threw off his cloak, and clasped her in his embrace.

“ My

“ My father ! my saviour ! an angel sent
“ from Heaven ! ” were the words she had
just time to articulate, before she fainted
in his arms.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IS there a sensation to which the human heart is susceptible stronger or more delightful than that which it experiences, when, plunged in the abyss of despair, it perceives the approach of a friend ? But to enjoy this the mind of Ida was too much oppressed ; she was ready to sink under her misfortunes. Let us, indeed, consider what she had suffered in the space of one short day ; and then judge how great must have been her surprise, to find herself, at the moment that she thought the whole world had abandoned her, clasped in the embrace of a father !

“ Is it possible ! ” said she at last, when she was able to speak : “ is it possible ? or
“ am I in a dream ? My father here, and
“ at such a moment ! ”

“ Could Ida then think, that he would
“ leave her for an instant in suspicious
“ hands, without watching over her ? ”

“ No,

“ No, I set off from Prague at the same
“ time with yourself: I have followed you
“ every where: I have observed your very
“ step: I would not let you know I was
“ near, that I might judge of your con-
“ duct when wholly left to yourself. In
“ like manner I had resolved to accom-
“ pany you on your return, without giv-
“ ing you the least reason to suspect it:
“ and I should have executed my resolve,
“ had you not received this unexpected
“ stroke.”

“ O God! a stroke indeed! a stroke
“ that will cost me my life!”

“ That will cost you your life! . . . An
“ excellent mode truly of defending your
“ innocence! No, Ida, you shall live
“ to cover with shame your accusers, who
“ wish to see you die as a malefactor!”

“ And who are my accusers?”

“ I have sought to discover them from
“ the moment I knew that you had been
“ cited before the secret tribunal. The
“ whole day I have been in quest of in-
“ formation, mixing in the crowd, and
“ wandering from place to place, to learn
“ what might be your crime. What I
“ have been able to learn is, that, when
“ the ladies of the empress were interro-
“ gated, the princess of Ratibor found
“ no better means of proving her inno-
“ cence, with respect to Sophia's unfor-
“ tunate

“tunate labour, than by accusing you.
“Her deposition was rumoured abroad :
“it was said, that she had answered for
“all the ladies present under the most solemn oath ; but that there was one absent, who, if appearances could be trusted, was certainly the culprit. The motives of her suspicion were asked ; but no one could inform me what they were : I only heard, that you were to be brought to trial, and that the judges testified much surprise and indignation, that you alone, of all the ladies of the empress, had not been taken up and interrogated.”

Ida listened with looks of anxiety and distress, but made no reply. Munster continued :

“The history of that letter of protection granted you by the emperor, at the request of my imprudent wife, was at length mentioned with such comments as you may easily conceive. The judges looked at one another ! ‘Have we need of any better proof?’ cried they. ‘Why seek an extraordinary protection if she were innocent? Why wish to prevent her being brought before the customary tribunals, if not conscious of some secret crime, that, if known, would expose her to the sword of justice? Ought she, however, on that account,

“ account, to remain unpunished?” My
“ information reaches no farther, and I
“ know not what has been since deter-
“ mined: but I have been assured, that
“ the judges did not separate till mid-
“ night, after having pledged themselves
“ by an oath to show you no favour.”

Ida hid her face in her father's bosom, and wept.—“ Go on, go on, said she, sobbing: “ continue to pierce my heart, with
“ the relation of my dreadful misfortune.”

“ My child, it is necessary that you
“ should know all. How otherwise will
“ you be able to defend yourself?”

“ And why, innocent as I am, must I
“ defend myself at all? Why regardless
“ of my letter of protection am I cited
“ before a court of justice!”

“ You are not cited before any civil
“ court, but before the grand tribunal of
“ God. And fear you, to appear before
“ the Almighty?”

“ Ah, were he to be my judge!” exclaimed Ida, stretching her hands to Heaven, with a look that spoke the purity of an angel. “ Were God to be my
“ judge....!”

“ Well then, submit to your fate with
“ that consoling hope. Those unknown
“ persons who render justice in his name
“ will be your judges: they were the only
“ ones before whom you could be cited.

“ Have

“ Have you forgotten the words, contained in your letter of protection: *“ We grant thee the privilege of not being arraigned for any misdemeanor, except before our immediate tribunal, or those deputed to hold our place in the criminal court.”*

“ Alas ! I did not comprehend them :” replied Ida, who found few motives of consolation in her father’s discourse.

“ Do you think, that men who have taken an oath the most solemn to judge with impartiality, will not discover your innocence ?”

“ I will think any thing you please :” replied she, with a faint and dejected voice : “ but of this I am very sure, that I shall die, if I must appear alone before those terrible judges.”

“ You shall not : I will accompany you.”

“ But whither ? Where do they hold their sessions ? Father John tells me every where and no where. What does he mean ?”

“ In reality, no one has yet seen the place where they assemble : but as you must appear, no doubt some means will be found of conducting you to your judges ; and to this purpose I will employ the two days we have left.”

“ But

“ But, to whom will you address yourself, since you are uninformed who are the members of this society?”

“ God knows, I am acquainted with none of them: yet this I know, that they exist in the midst of us under a thousand different forms, without our suspecting them: they walk by our sides, eat at our tables, and we are ignorant of it. My enquiry however will reach the ears of some one or other of them, and he will instruct me what is to be done.”

In this manner did they converse, Ida sitting by her father's side, till morning. Sometimes an extreme paleness overspread her countenance: then her burning cheek and inflamed eye bespoke the fever with which she was consumed. The old man was alarmed for her life. He at length prevailed on her to drink a small glass of wine, into which he had secretly introduced some narcotic tincture, and she fell asleep. Having placed her gently on a couch, he shut the door, and departed before it was quite day-light, to endeavour to discover what he so much wished to learn.

CHAPTER XIX.

SO powerful was the operation of the soporific, that Ida passed the whole day in sleep, and awoke not till her father arrived, just at the approach of night. He induced her to take some nutriment, which he brought with him; and, sleep having calmed her perturbation, her strength appeared somewhat recovered. Finding her sufficiently calm to hear the result of his inquiries, he thus began :

“ We are in a country, which is the
“ chief seat of the secret tribunal. It is
“ not so difficult as I at first imagined, to
“ gain information of what most imports
“ us to know. Citations of the nature of
“ yours, are not extraordinary here ;
“ and instances are not wanting of people
“ who have escaped the hands of these
“ dreadful avengers, or been acquitted by
“ them. It is deemed, I am told, a mark
“ of infinite honour, to be proclaimed
“ innocent by them. I have heard a
“ strange adventure of a gentleman of
“ this country, of the name of Conrad
“ von Langen *, who has hitherto been
“ pursued in vain by the secret tribunal,

* According to other historians, John von Langen.

“ which

“ which has not been able to lay hold of
“ him.”

“ And is it not equally possible for me
“ to escape?”

“ You cannot, you ought not to at-
“ tempt it, for you are innocent. As to
“ Conrad, I know not whether he be
“ guilty or not; nor does the enquiry
“ concern us. I mention him only, be-
“ cause, on hearing his story, it came
“ into my head to endeavour to speak to
“ him, or one of his people, in order
“ to learn what we are so anxious
“ to know. By unexpected good luck
“ I found that his maitre-d’hotel was my
“ ancient comrade in the army, the good
“ Walter of whom you have heard me
“ speak, who at the surprize of Bern had
“ the misfortune to lose his hand, and
“ was in consequence obliged to quit the
“ profession of arms. He has told me
“ a great many circumstances of the se-
“ cret tribunal, but his discourse was so
“ obscure, so interlarded with broken ex-
“ pressions, and half formed sentences,
“ that I know not what to think of him.
“ There were, he informed me, persons
“ of various descriptions, knights and
“ their esquires, citizens as well as nobles,
“ in its services. Perhaps he belongs to
“ it himself. Be that, however, as it
“ may, he assured me, that its dreadful
Vol. I. I “ sum-

“ summoners were commonly obliged to
“ resort to force to bring before them the
“ persons who were accused; that it was
“ rare for a culprit to appear on the first
“ citation; that they who waited for a
“ second, or a third, were apprehended
“ wherever they were found; but that
“ those who appeared at the first, as you,
“ my dear Ida, will do, had the advantage of inspiring a presumption of their
“ innocence, and were treated with greater
“ lenity. And finally, that the only way
“ of discovering where the secret tribunal
“ assembled, was to repair, three quarters of an hour after midnight, to that
“ part of the town where four streets
“ meet, and where was always to be found
“ a person who would lead the accused
“ blind-folded before the judges.

“ I thanked him for his information,
“ and told him that you would carefully
“ observe his directions, and that I was
“ determined to accompany you. Walter, upon this, looked me stedfastly in
“ the face, and asked if I were one of
“ them. Not knowing what was his
“ drift, I made no answer. He looked
“ at me again with still greater earnestness, uttering some incoherent words
“ which I did not understand: Still I
“ was silent. “ Well,” resumed he, after
“ a moment’s pause, “ we shall see whether
“ ther

“ther you will be permitted to accompany her. At any rate, however, you may be certain she will arrive in safety at the place of destination; the rest depends on her innocence.”

Whence could proceed the sort of tranquillity, which this mysterious tale of Munster imparted to Ida? for certain it is that she felt relieved from the load that oppressed her, spoke of her situation with composure, formed arrangements respecting the manner in which she should conduct herself, and sought to penetrate the obscurity in which she was involved. It seemed no longer impossible to her to support her misfortune, to face her accusers, and yet survive the shock.

Was it that Ida really discovered reasons for hope in what she had heard? Or was it with her, as with a multitude of others, who sink at the first gust of an approaching storm, but gradually lift up their heads, as the object of their terror becomes familiar to them? Or was it, lastly, that there are benevolent Genii ever ready to administer to their favourites, when their sufferings become too poignant, and mingle in the cup of bitterness some drops of heavenly consolation?

Whatever were the cause, Ida suddenly became tranquil; she enjoyed during the night the peaceful slumbers of innocence,

while her father sat watching by her pillow, and for the two following days she remained in the same happy state.

At length the night, lately so much dreaded, approached, but brought with it no other terrors, than what a light supper, which the old man had provided, assisted by a glass of wine, were sufficient to dispel. Could their enemies have witnessed the serenity of these two victims of so cruel a fate, it would have inspired them with sensations of envy; their conversation was even gay.

Time passed on. The clock struck twelve, and they scarcely seemed to notice it. "When the moon is over yon steeple, it will be time for us to be gone," said Munster, looking out of the window. Their conversation, however, presently slackened, and at length ceased. The fears of Ida began to return.—"How my heart beats!" said she, laying her hand on her bosom. She walked up and down the room with agitation.—"Where," said she, "is the moon now?"—"It is..." "Take your hood, my child, and let us depart."—"Yet one moment," she replied: and falling on her knees, she sighed a short prayer, while Munster re-echoed her sighs. She then put on her hood and they hurried out of the house.

Silently they walked through the streets
in

in which not a person was to be seen. The knees of Ida trembled with cold, while her cheeks were flushed with the crimson of fever. They arrived at the great steeple of St. Bartholomew's, where met four large streets leading to the extremities of the city. "Behold, my father, the designated place!" said Ida, with a faltering voice. The moon shone on the spot, while a deep shadow cast its gloom over the distant avenues. Near them, in one of the streets, they saw a man approaching, with slow and solemn steps, whom the dim light of the moon, and the terrors of Ida transformed into a giant. He was wrapt in a kind of mail, so as that his eyes only were visible. He accosted them.—"Who are you?" said he.—"Ida Munster and her father."

"It is the former I seek. The other may withdraw."

"No, I will not withdraw: I will follow her wherever she goes."

"You will follow her? That depends on the manner in which you shall answer the following questions. What are the names of these four streets? That which is enlightened by the moon I myself call *fire*; that in the shade *iron**. What are the other two?"

* The usual words by which the members of the secret tribunal recognized each other were, *feil* *fein*,

To this unintelligible question Munster made no reply.

"Begone," said the man in the mask :
"thou dost not belong to us."

"Must I then quit you, my father ;
exclaimed Ida, sobbing.

The stranger tore her from the arms of Munster, and pushing him away, somewhat rudely, "Go," said he, in a tone of voice too gentle to assert with the action that accompanied it : "you may safely trust
"your daughter to my care."

"Whose is that voice ?" said Munster to himself as he seated himself under the portico of the church. "It is surely familiar to me." Meanwhile Ida was led off by her conductor, who turned once more towards Munster, made a signal to him not to follow, and was soon out of sight.

stein, gras, grein : in English, *sleep, stone, grass, groan*. It is said however, that, on various occasions, other words were employed. St. Pieffinger, Vol. IV. p. 400, asserts that the first word should be *stock*, (in English *steal*,) not *steil*.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XX.

COURTEOUS reader, thou wishest, no doubt, to accompany this innocent maiden before her judges: but would it be safe for me to introduce thee to a place which no profane eye has yet explored? Rather let us sit down with honest Munster in the porch of St. Bartholomew's. Look: the moon has disappeared: the dawn begins to peep: we shall soon hear news of the object of our anxiety.

Munster was as firmly persuaded as you and I can be, that she whom he called his daughter was innocent. Walter had assured him, the preceding day, that if she were found guilty he would never see her more, as these avengers of God caused the sentences they pronounced to be executed on the spot: but he had added, that if there were the least prospect of her justifying herself, she would be safely brought back to him in the morning, by the persons into whose hands he should commit her at night, at the junction of the four streets.

Firmly relying on the innocence of Ida, the veracity of Walter, and the justice of the secret tribunal, he waited with tranquillity, and he waited not in vain: for, ere

the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses were awake his daughter was in his arms.

"Thou art restored to me, then!" cried Munster: "thou art restored to me! thou art innocent!"

"I am indeed innocent: I swear it by that God, who is my supreme judge; though no one will as yet declare me so. . . . Alas! your poor Ida is restored to you but for a short time. The avenging sword, still suspended over her head hangs but by a thread. It is required that I should justify myself; and how shall I be able to do this, since there is every appearance against me? Oh! my father!"

Her sobs prevented her saying more; and leaning on the arm of Munster they silently walked towards their home. Arrived there, she sat down breathless, and resting her head on her hand, wiped her tears as they flowed under her hood.

"Tell me, my dear child, what has passed: conceal nothing from me."

"Alas! I have not long to remain with you. As a particular favour I am permitted to take up my residence with the Urfulines, for a short time, till my affair is finished, and I am again summoned before my judges. Do not grieve, my dear father, you may see
"me

“ me there, I have asked leave to receive
“ your visits.”

Munster pressed her hand with the earnestness of anxious affection, and again conjured her to relate her story.

“ How shall I describe to you what I
“ felt, when torn from your arms by
“ my conductor? I thought I should have
“ expired: yet a certain something, that
“ I cannot describe, presently inspired me
“ with confidence. You must yourself
“ have perceived that the man in the
“ mask treated me neither with cruelty
“ nor even harshness; his voice was gentle: by the light of the moon I discovered a tear starting from his eye;
“ and I perceived, a circumstance on
“ which I could not avoid reflecting, that
“ he had lost his left hand. Is it possible, that he could be your friend, the
“ good, the honest Walter?”

“ It was, it was,” exclaimed the old man: “ it certainly was Walter, for I now
“ recollect the sound of his voice.”

Ida continued:—“ That discovery calmed my agitation. I found myself not
“ delivered entirely into unknown hands,
“ and you have always spoken to me so
“ highly of Walter, that with him I considered myself as safe. After having
“ walked on for some time, he suddenly
“ threw over my head a thick veil, which

“ so completely covered my face, that it
“ was impossible for me to discern the
“ road we took. One while we passed
“ over what appeared to me uncultivated
“ ground, and then again over ruins : we
“ ascended, and descended : sometimes
“ I fancied myself breathing the air of
“ the fields ; at others the sound of our
“ footsteps appeared to be echoed back
“ by surrounding vaults. At length we
“ descended thirty steps, which I count-
“ ed, I know not why ; and my veil be-
“ ing taken off, I found myself in a dark
“ dreary place, where at first I could dis-
“ tinguish nothing. Finding myself ex-
“ tremely fatigued, my conductor per-
“ mitted me to sit down on a stone. By
“ degrees my eyes became familiarised to
“ the obscurity of the place, and I found
“ myself at the entrance of a large square.
“ Whether I were in the country, or
“ not, I cannot say : but all around me,
“ as far as my view could penetrate, I
“ beheld lofty vaults ; and over my head
“ the starry sky. At a distance I ob-
“ served by the light of torches, which,
“ though there were many, but feebly
“ illumined the vast space, serving scarce-
“ ly more than to render darkness visible ;
“ human figures dressed in black, some
“ of whom came towards us and joined
“ my conductor. They were all masked
“ like

“ like him, and conversed only by signs,
“ intermingled with a few abrupt words.
“ Every moment their number increased;
“ and apparently there were several hun-
“ dred of them. The silence that pre-
“ vailed in this assembly, interrupted only
“ by my tears and sighs, appeared incom-
“ prehensible to me.

“ On a sudden I heard the doleful
“ sound of a bell. Three times was it
“ struck; and as often did my heart quake
“ within me. The place was now more
“ enlightened, and I perceived a circle
“ composed of several persons in black,
“ and masked, who, I was informed by
“ my conductor, were my judges.—‘ You
“ will immediately be called upon,’ said
“ he to me in a whisper; ‘ if your con-
“ science be clear, prepare to answer with
“ courage. Take off your hood, you
“ must appear with your face uncovered.’

“ Scarcely had he done speaking, when
“ a voice more appalling than the sound
“ of the bell, cried out in a tone of au-
“ thority:

“ *Ida Munster! sorceress! accused of*
“ *murder, of high treason, appear! We,*
“ *the secret avengers of the Invisible, cite*
“ *thee before the justice of God! appear!*
“ *appear!*

“ Though these terrible expressions
“ were not new to me, I cannot express the
“ oppres-

“oppression I felt at my heart on their
“being pronounced. It continued indeed
“but for a moment; for the consciouf-
“ness of my innocence inspired me with
“courage almost supernatural. With
“countenance erect I stepped forward,
“and boldly looked round on the whole
“assembly, without testifying the least
“fear.—‘To such a citation I ought not
“to answer,’ cried I, with a voice strength-
“ened by indignation. ‘My name is
“Ida Munster; but I am no criminal.’

“At this, he who appeared to be the
“chief of the tribunal, said:—‘Come
“near, and listen to the complaints that
“are adduced against you, and the wit-
“nesses who attest their truth.’

“I advanced, and, falling on my knees,
“‘I swear,’ cried I, by him who lives for
“ever, that I am not a forceress, that I
“have assassinated no one, that I have
“never committed the crime of high
“treason, and that all which the witnesses
“may have deposed against me is false.’

“The examination began: but, O my
“father! how shall I relate to you the
“substance of my accusation! Is it pos-
“sible, that the merest trifles can be con-
“sidered into crimes, or regarded at least
“as a presumption of crimes?

“The first thing adduced against me,
“was the lock of the empress’s hair. Alas!

“I was

“ I was obliged to give it up, and the
“ braid of gold net-work to which it was
“ fastened, is now a useless ornament about
“ my neck. That precious remembrance
“ which I wore in my bosom, became one
“ of the strongest proofs against me.—
“ You remember, that yesterday in the
“ dark, I scratched my cheek, and spotted
“ my veil with blood: my judges pre-
“ sumed, that it was the same veil with
“ which I had wiped the blood from the
“ neck of the empress on her wedding-
“ day, when she gave herself the slight
“ wound you have heard me mention, and
“ I was asked for what purpose I carried
“ such things about me. They asked, too,
“ whether I had not said to one of my
“ friends, that the empress would be forced
“ to love me, as long as that lock of her
“ hair remained next my heart: and ac-
“ cused me of having so fascinated her,
“ that she could not be happy without me
“ and my harp for a single day; as a proof
“ of which they alledged, that lately, dur-
“ ing her illness, she had confessed it was
“ impossible for her to live, or even to die
“ without me.

“ ‘ Did she say so?’ cried I, with rapture.
“ ‘ Matchless woman! why cannot I see
“ her once more? Why, if I must die,
“ cannot I die at her feet?’ . . . Silence
“ was

“ was imposed on me, and the interrogations continued.

“ I was asked, whence came the riches of my father and mother, after they had lost by fire, all they possessed : by what supernatural means I had been warned that the conflagration would happen : why I had not the humanity to acquaint the people of the city, and my parents with the circumstance, but had carried my wickedness so far, as to abandon them to their fate, and save only myself : and what was become of the chevalier Herman of Unna, on whom I had cast a spell, to make him in love with me, whom I had so deprived of the use of his reason, that he had wandered about the country for three days together, without knowing what he did, and whom in all probability I had afterwards caused to be assassinated.

“ At the mention of Herman assassinated, I fell senseless on the ground. After they had brought me to myself, I began loudly to lament his death. Oh heavens! if it should be true, that he is dead!

Tears now choked the voice of Ida, and she ceased not to weep, till Munster soothed her by the assurance, that he had lately received a letter from Herman, and that he was well. She then continued her narration.

“ The

“ The complaints exhibited against me,
“ became every moment more afflicting.
“ The Italian prince, who had abandoned
“ the princess of Ratibor, and whom of
“ course I had also enchanted by some se-
“ cret spell, was not forgotten ; but the last
“ and most cruel reproach was, the unfor-
“ tunate labour of the empress, which
“ was in like manner imputed to me, as
“ well as the dangerous state in which she
“ yet continues.

“ God knows what answer I made to
“ these different accusations. This only I
“ remember, that I, who fancied myself so
“ weak, so timid, felt myself animated
“ with supernatural strength, and was si-
“ lent to none of the charges. I spoke
“ little, and with reserve; but what I said
“ must have been of weight, for more than
“ once I put my accusers to silence. The
“ sky now began to grow less obscure, the
“ distant crowing of the cocks announced
“ the approach of dawn ; when instantly
“ all the assembly arose.

“ He who had presided, then addressed
“ me in these words : ‘ Ida, the sword
“ still hangs over your head : one and
“ twenty days are granted you to produce
“ incontestible proofs of your innocence.
“ Your readiness to appear at the first ci-
“ tation, induces us for the present to
“ permit you to depart in peace ; but
“ think

“ think not of taking flight, our eyes and
“ arms are every where, like the presence
“ of the Eternal.

“ I prostrated myself at the foot of the
“ judgment seat, and solicited permission
“ to retire to a convent. My request was
“ granted, and I was moreover promised,
“ in consideration of my youth and sex,
“ some extraordinary favour; but what
“ that favour was, I was not informed.

“ Again I was veiled, and then led away.
“ On the road, I begged my conductor to
“ use his interest for me to be placed in
“ the convent of Ursulines, whither I had
“ been accustomed to go, and to obtain
“ permission to see you there. This he
“ assured me he could grant on his own
“ authority, such things being left entirely
“ to him. I would have said more to him,
“ but he assumed the same reserve as when
“ he conducted me to the tribunal. At
“ the corner of the street he left me, prob-
“ ably that he might not be known by
“ you, whom he pointed out waiting for
“ me at the church of St. Bartholomew.”

“ My dear Ida,” cried Munster, when
she had finished her recital: “ be of good
“ heart. I am persuaded your affair will
“ terminate happily. I shall this day take
“ a step, which the absence of the person
“ on whom I found my hopes, has hither-
“ to prevented. The day on which you
“ were

“ were cited, and before I saw you, I
“ went to the count of Wirtemberg’s, to
“ acquaint him with something of the ut-
“ most importance, and which would have
“ been of great help to you, had he known
“ it. I was told, however, that he was
“ gone from home, and would not return
“ for three days. Those three days are
“ expired, and I will go to him the mo-
“ ment I have conducted you to your con-
“ vent.”

“ Alas! it will be lost labour. I ad-
“ dressed myself to him, the instant I was
“ summoned before the secret tribunal, as
“ he had always appeared well disposed
“ toward me; but he too abandoned me.
“ Besides, it is probable he was not from
“ home, but refused to admit you, be-
“ cause, knowing you to be my father, he
“ was apprehensive you might wish to so-
“ licit him in my behalf.

“ He has always, you say, appeared
“ well-disposed towards you,” replied
Munster, after a short silence: what
“ proofs has he given you of it?”

“ You know, my dear father, we are
“ naturally led to consider the slightest
“ marks of attention from the great, as a
“ proof of their being interested in our fa-
“ vour. And at the time that every thing
“ smiled around me, he seemed to regard
“ me, I thought, with kindness. I re-
“ member

“ member particularly the moment of his
“ first seeing me in the empress’s closet.
“ He distinguished me from all my com-
“ panions, and paid me attentions that
“ were extremely embarrassing to me:
“ and when the empress, as was her
“ custom, told him my name, that dear
“ name which I shall ever deem an ho-
“ nour to me, in order to let him know,
“ that I was not of noble birth, his atten-
“ tion to me was increased. ‘Munster!’
“ replied he: ‘Ida Munster! . . . The
“ name of Ida is pleasing to my ear: it
“ brings to my remembrance a beloved
“ wife, whom, alas! I long have lost.’ The
“ princess of Ratibor remarked, that it
“ was a proof of the pride of my parents
“ to give me the name of a princess. But
“ the count did not appear to heed the
“ reflection: he came up to me, embraced
“ me affectionately, and said with a smile:
“ ‘I am happy to learn that you are a ci-
“ tizen’s daughter, for had you been a
“ lady of quality, I durst not so freely ex-
“ press the friendship with which you in-
“ spire me.’ The princess of Ratibor,
“ who was by my side, eyed me with a
“ look of contempt, and her eyes seemed
“ to say, that the last observation of the
“ count, was humiliating to her to whom
“ it was addressed: but too simple, too
“ little vain, to be of her opinion, I kissed
“ the

“ the hand of the respectable old peer,
“ and received from him in return, not
“ without blushing, a salute on my fore-
“ head. From that moment, he always
“ asked for me, called me his Ida, inquir-
“ ed after my parents, and told me, that
“ he had formerly a person of the name
“ of Munster in his service, a very brave
“ and worthy man, with many other things
“ equally flattering, which people of hum-
“ ble birth so highly prize from the great.
“ For a time I thought that I had found
“ in him a protector: but now, that I
“ have enemies seeking to oppress me, I
“ have discovered my mistake.

To this Munster made no reply: nor indeed had he time, for scarcely had she finished, when somebody entered to conduct her to the convent. They accordingly separated, after tenderly taking leave, and promising shortly to see each other again.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next day Munster made his appearance at the parlour of the Ursulines.—
“ I have strange things to tell you,” said he to Ida: “ read this paper; a great
“ number of copies of it are stuck up
“ against

“ against all the public buildings.” Ida read :

“ *We, the secret judges of crimes and protectors of innocence turn to the four quarters of the globe, and proclaim: If any one dare undertake the defence of Ida Munster, who is in a state of accusation, let him appear!*”

“ Oh God !” cried Ida, lifting the paper towards heaven, “ I feel that thou hast not wholly forsaken me; that thou wilt yet save me!”

Munster continued: “ I went to my friend Walter, and shewed him this paper. He smiled, and assured me, that such a proclamation was an extraordinary favour, of which you might be proud, as there was scarcely another instance of a defender being allowed to a person accused of witchcraft, still less that all the world should be called upon to plead his cause. I told him the resolution I had taken, to appear myself in defence of your innocence. He shook his head, and added: ‘ If you were a member of the secret tribunal, and could say: “ I swear by our dreadful oath, that my daughter is innocent:” It would be of weight, and equivalent to a complete justification: but without this, your oath, would be reckoned as nothing. Neither father, nor
“ mother,

“ mother, nor brother, nor any other re-
“ lation, if not of the society, can be
“ admitted to defend a person accused be-
“ fore the secret tribunal. In the few in-
“ stances in which this liberty is allowed
“ to the profane, it must be a stranger
“ who takes upon him the task; and then,
“ in order that there may be time for such
“ an one to appear, an interval of one and
“ twenty days is appointed, between the
“ first and second meeting of the tri-
“ bunal.”

“ ‘ You astonish me,’ replied I: ‘ you
“ speak of the affair as if you had been
“ present. Am I right? Are you really?’..
“ Walter interrupted me, with an air of
“ dissatisfaction, without answering my
“ question; but desired me to leave him,
“ and never to visit him again, if I would
“ not desist from such interrogations.”

“ On quitting him, I repaired to the
“ house of count Wirtemberg. There,
“ what you predicted, came to pass: I
“ was refused admittance: yet see him I
“ must. To effect this an expedient has
“ occurred to me, by means of which I
“ have no doubt of obtaining access to
“ him. You know the gold chain I gave
“ you, when you entered the tenth year
“ of your age: if I could convey that
“ chain to the count of Wirtemberg, and
“ recall to his memory certain circum-
“ stances,

“stances, I should not be sent from his
“door. Give it me, it is at present of no
“use to you. It shall be returned to you
“in a manner more flattering than you can
“imagine. . . . You seem confused!
“Have you lost it, my child? Was it
“destroyed in the fire? . . . But no;
“your mother told me, when I mentioned
“it, that it was saved, and that you had
“it on when you went to the church. . .
“Speak, Ida! what am I to think? . . .
“Believe me, the loss of it would be of
“more consequence than you are aware.”

“Oh! my father!” exclaimed Ida, agitated: “I. . . . My mother Indeed I have it not I gave it to
“Herman, when”

“Imprudent girl! You have been the
“instrument of destroying your own happiness. . . . And my wife!
“How could she permit it? Herman
“then, is in possession of that jewel! . . .
“Oh! where shall I find him! How shall
“I recover it from him! It might at this
“juncture save your life”

Munster gave way to his despair, while Ida endeavoured in vain to appease him, and implored his forgiveness. She offered him a ring, which she had received at the same time with the chain: but he refused it, saying, that without the one, the other was useless. Ida, bathed in tears, begged him

him to explain to her this mysterious affair. He tore himself from her arms, and for the first time in his life, quitted her with every mark of displeasure.

As it was impossible for Ida to conceive the importance of such a trifle, she soon thought no more of it, and regretted nothing but having incurred the anger of her father, which she hoped at his next visit to remove. She well knew how much he loved her, and the power her prayers and tears had over him. In vain, however, did she that day expect him; in vain the two succeeding ones. She then became impatient, and obtained permission from the superior of the convent, who was her friend, to send to the house at which he had taken up his abode, and inquire after him. His apartment was shut, and no one could give any information respecting him. She sent to Walter: his answer was, that the last time Munster called on him, he had dismissed him a little uncivilly, at which he was probably offended, as he had not seen him since.

What alarming news for Ida! And surely she needed no fresh subjects of inquietude! Of the three weeks respite which she had obtained, four days were now spent, and the rest passed away in like manner, in the midst of apprehension and dread, till the last

last only remained, and in this single day was she to procure, what in all the others she had been unable to find, incontestible proofs of her innocence, or undergo the sad alternative of being irremediably condemned to death. Judge of the dreadful situation of this poor girl! It seemed as if every thing from which she might hope for comfort was annihilated for ever. She had heard, that the empress was recovering her health: she would fain have persuaded herself, that she knew nothing of her misfortune, or knew it but imperfectly: she hoped, that, if she could acquaint her with her story, she should receive from her all the succour she wanted. But every attempt made by the nuns to obtain access to Sophia proved ineffectual. At length, when the last evening came, Ida was obliged to confess, that she had nothing to rely on but her innocence; and she was even at a loss in what way she should present herself before her judges. Not to appear would have been to act contrary to her principles, and injurious to her honour: to repair unaccompanied to the destined spot would have been dangerous, and little compatible with female modesty. What then was to be done? A council was held on the occasion, and the worthy superior of the convent permitted Ida to send for old Walter, and request

request him to act, on this occasion, as a father to the daughter of his friend.

The old man appeared greatly disturbed at this proposal. His colour changed, he would have spoken, he stammered, and at length, striking the ground with his foot, with marks of considerable displeasure, begged that they would not tease him for an impossibility. With this he departed, and left Ida, as well as the nuns, in the greatest consternation.

They wept, they prayed, and midnight was fast approaching. Ida was left alone, while the rest of the community retired to the superior's apartment, in order to come to some determination, "It is impossible," said the good old lady : "to abandon this
" poor girl in her present circumstances.
" I would swear by this image of the blessed Virgin, that she is innocent, and will
" be found so. And shall we be so cruel as
" to leave her exposed to dangers of another kind? She is handsome, as you and
" I were in our youth. If the world be
" still as it was in my time, she is unsafe,
" however short may be the way: she will
" fall into the hands of some young libertine, and will be totally lost to our
" convent. What is to be done, sisters? Do
" you think it would be any violation of
" our holy rules to conduct her ourselves
" to the place appointed? I and the four

“elder nuns will take on ourselves the charge, and”

It was impossible for the superior to finish: a general acclamation interrupted her in the midst of her speech. The attachment these nuns had conceived for the lovely Ida, whom they considered, I know not why, as one of their future sisters; or perhaps the desire of once more setting a foot out of the convent, made them dispute the preference which the superior wished on this occasion to give to age: and, to preserve peace, she was obliged to let all the staid matrons, who formed the council, without a single exception, accompany her. Instantly a general joy took place, and a deputation was sent to Ida, to inform her of the resolution taken by the community.

This mark of friendship transported Ida, and inspired her with so lively a gratitude, that her lips seemed ready to pronounce a vow which the nuns would have heard with pleasure. Indeed they fully reckoned upon it, and thought, that nothing but some unforeseen accident could prevent it.

The clock struck twelve; the church of St. Bartholomew's was at a distance; there was no time to be lost; it was even necessary to forego the solemn benediction, that had been proposed to be received in the chapel of the convent, before embarking on this important enterprize; a benediction

tion fortunately foregone, as it might have led the pious Ida into some indiscreet promise of which she might have repented. In haste they took their veils: in haste they inspected the cells of the younger nuns, that none of them might take it into their heads to trench on the privileges of their seniors: they traversed the long galleries of the convent: the gate was opened, and with palpitating hearts they launched from the confines of those sacred walls into a sinful world.

The heart of Ida equally palpitated. Guided by the light of the stars, and accompanied by those holy maidens, she repaired to the spot to which she had before been conducted by her father. The superior, by whose side she walked, dinned her ears with pious exhortations, and arguments of comfort; but the silence observed by Munster, on her former sorrowful journey, was much better adapted to her situation; and there was nothing she would not willingly have given at this moment, to have wept in quiet, and without interruption.

At length they arrived at the appointed place. Her masked conductor, who was already there, was somewhat embarrassed at sight of her numerous attendants; yet the presence of the nuns seemed to make on him a favourable impression. He fa-

luted them with a profound bow, gave Ida time to take leave of them, obligingly offered her his right arm, and then retired with her slowly, while the eyes of the nuns followed them with no small curiosity. When they arrived at the corner of the street, and her conductor, as before, covered her head with a veil, she again perceived, that his left hand was wanting. "Ah!" said Ida: "Why do you wish to conceal from me, that you are Walter?" "It would be so consolatory to be assured that I am in the hands of a brave and worthy man, and not in those of a stranger!" A murmur of dissatisfaction was the sole answer she received. They were both silent, and they arrived much sooner than before at the place of their destination.

The spot to which she was this time conducted seemed different from the former. Its canopy was the same, the starry heavens: but it did not appear to be encircled with lofty walls; on the contrary, the eye was unobstructed on every side, for the little way it could penetrate, except that on that by which they arrived were thick bushes, which probably surrounded the whole place, but were imperceptible on account of their distance. Ida perceived, that the ground on which she walked was turf; and from various circumstances she

she conjectured herself to be in a wood, with which she was not wholly unacquainted. Possibly she was not mistaken; for *there is no place*, as a writer of these times informs us, *in which the sessions of the secret tribunal might not be held, provided it were private and secure from surprise.*

This second assembly was full as numerous as the first, but it was less distinguishable, and perhaps even more silent. The bell gave the accustomed signal, and the voice which Ida had already heard, thus proclaimed:

“We, the servants of the invisible
“God, who judge in secret, turn to the
“four quarters of the globe, and call on
“the defender of the accused. Ida: appear! appear!”

This summons was three times repeated. The scene became more luminous; and Ida was stepping forward without being called, when her conductor said to her in a low voice: “remain where you are; you have to day nothing to answer.”

Ida then viewed with more tranquillity these terrible unknown personages; a mingled sentiment of hope and joy filled her heart, and presently was elevated to transport, when, after the third summons, a figure stepped forward, masked like the others, but of so noble a port, that the

young prisoner could not help preferring him to all the assembly.

The champion of innocence slowly advanced, and placing himself before the seat of the chief of the tribunal: "Behold," said he, "the defender of innocence: put me to death if Ida be guilty."

The cause was opened. The questions already put to Ida were one by one repeated; but she heard them not with the same terror as at first; for the stranger appeared competent to answer them, and she believed herself perfectly justified. But her judges were not so easy to be convinced. The adventure of the lock of hair, which, in those days of ignorance, appeared so suspicious a circumstance, was still undenied; the words she had uttered on the subject, to the young princess of Raibor, were equally disproved, and testified strongly against her. The empress beside was still not wholly recovered, and Herman of Unna, whom Ida was accused of having assassinated, it was asserted, was no where to be found.

The champion of Ida demanded that they should wait the recovery of Sophia, before they proceeded to pass sentence, since if the prisoner were guilty, the princess could give much more direct information on the subject, than had hitherto been

been offered: but this demand was rejected. As to the complaint respecting the murder of Herman, he offered instantly to produce proofs of its falshood. But on this head silence was imposed on him, and he was ordered to confine himself to the principal charge, that of forcery. Conscious of the difficulty, not to say impossibility of completely refuting such an accusation, he kept a melancholy silence, which filled the mind of Munster's daughter with alarm and terror. (e)

Recovering himself, however, he at length said: "I am aware of the danger of my situation; I am aware, that no one can engage in the defence of a person arraigned before this tribunal, without exposing himself to the same punishment as the culprit; if he be found guilty. Be it so: here I am; put me to death if there be no safety for Ida; but I call Heaven and earth to witness, that she is innocent. Tremble ye judges! her blood will find avengers: she is not the daughter of an obscure citizen; she is the daughter of a prince."

Instantly a murmur pervaded the whole assembly. The greater part charged him with having invented this fable in order to protract the trial. In consequence it was determined, that he should be confined till he proved his assertion, and he

was immediately seized.—“Oh! they will kill, they will murder him!” exclaimed Ida: and, as she uttered these words, the whole assembly appeared to swim before her eyes in a thick mist, the lights disappeared, her ears rung with fearful noises, and she sunk senseless on the ground.

CHAPTER XXII.

BY degrees Ida recovered from her swoon. Day had begun to appear. The adventures of the preceding night seemed a dream to her. She looked round and found herself under the portico of St. Bartholomew's. She raised herself upon her knees, and would have gotten upon her feet; but she was unable. In one of the four streets a man approached, whom she perceived to be Walter. She stretched out her arms and called to him as loudly as her strength would permit. He hastened to her assistance. “Come,” said he, “let me conduct you to your convent. But I had almost forgotten to ask, what has brought you hither?”—“Alas! do you not then remember,” said Ida, whose recollection now began to return,

return, "do you not remember the events that have just passed; for surely you were present as well as myself?"

"Talk not to me thus incoherently. Ask not such useless questions," replied Walter, with some displeasure. "Let us be gone before any one sees us here."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Ida, "what will become of me? Oh, tell me what I am to do! you know my unhappy situation; you know that my last hopes are now annihilated."

Walter was silent, and meditated for some time how he should act. But he knew, that, to perform his part with fidelity, he must pretend not to understand her.

Ida besought him to have pity on her, and to be her friend: adding, "you can best advise me, for you will never convince me that you are not acquainted with every circumstance that has taken place." At this Walter grew impatient. She appealed to the deficiency of his left hand, as a proof that he was her conductor. He to his dress, which bore no resemblance to that worn by the man in the mask. Ida having far greater subjects of disquietude, was at length silent, and they arrived at the convent.

Fain would I draw a charitable veil over the manner in which the young Munster

was received by the Urfulines, who expected not to see her otherwise than honourably acquitted. At first they were offended that the tribunal had not more favourably treated a person, to whom they had paid such distinguished marks of respect. By degrees, however, doubts crept into their mind; and they began to ask one another, whether Ida were really as innocent as they had supposed her. From that moment she experienced neglect; they endeavoured not to console her, they went not to converse with her in solitude, and soon things were carried so far, that old Walter, who daily visited the parlour, was her only resource.

Ida was at a loss what to think. She felt how alarming was her situation; and yet were her thoughts still more occupied by the stranger who had appeared before the tribunal in her defence.

“Do you not suspect,” said she to Walter, “that it was my father?”—Walter shook his head.—“Who was it then? who could it be?”—“I know not.”—“O Walter! I conjure you tell me. You know: I am sure you do.”—“Do you wish, by talking thus, to drive me from you?”—“Oh! no: but promise me, at least, that you will befriend my generous, my unfortunate defender; and that you will seek to discover what is
“become

"become of my father."—"Your father!" "Do you know then who your father is?" Ida looked at him with astonishment, and repeated her demand: and Walter, perceiving that she had not attended to what the stranger had said respecting her birth, but still believed herself the daughter of Munster, again relapsed into his mysterious taciturnity.

Ida began to weep, reproaching the old man with cruelty. Drawn by this charge from this silence, he begged her to be calm, and of good courage, as it was probable her fate would soon undergo a change.

"See my prediction accomplished!" said he to her one morning that he came earlier than usual to visit her.

Ida had already seen too many placards of the secret tribunal; not to know, at the first glance, that the paper he held in his hand was one; but notwithstanding the agreeable manner in which it was presented, she feared to peruse it, and Walter was obliged to read it to her. It contained . . . imagine, dear reader, the transport of Ida . . . it contained a solemn declaration of her innocence; and a general acquittal from every charge exhibited against her. Joy now produced on her the effect she had so often experienced from grief. Recovered from her fainting, she a thousand

land times asked if it were indeed true; if they were not deceiving her.—The happy news soon spread, and immediately she was surrounded by nuns, who loaded her with compliments, assurances of friendship, and entreaties never to quit the convent, but to spend the remainder of her life in their tranquil abode. Ida had not forgotten that the day before she had been given to understand, that, as her innocence was not acknowledged, her residence in the convent could not be of long duration: but she was too happy to think of resenting it. She replied therefore to their civilities with her wonted good-nature, though she was resolved instantly to quit a house, the inhabitants of which could pass so easily from one extreme to the other.

At this moment she was informed that there was a coach at the gate of the convent, which had orders to convey her to the house of count Wirtemberg.

It was natural for Ida to suppose, that her justification being known, the former friendship of those who had abandoned her in her misfortune would revive; and it was highly pleasing to her to find that the count of Wirtemberg, who had always treated her with marks of attachment, was one of the first to think of her on this occasion. She hastened therefore to the coach,

coach, and amused her fancy on the way with a thousand agreeable reveries. She hoped to find, at Wirtemberg's house, her father and her unknown defender, and to be restored by the count to the favour of the empress. She hoped a thousand things beside: for what indeed will not young persons hope, who are prone to consider the slightest smile of fortune as an infallible earnest of the most signal favours?

Every thing seemed to indicate that Ida would not be wholly deceived in her expectations. She saw the old count of Wirtemberg hasten to meet her, and clasp her in his arms, with an ardour, that would have appeared strange, if in her present situation she had had time to reflect. The count led her to his closet, through a crowd of courtiers, who bowed to the ground to salute her as she passed. Having shut the door: "Ida, my dear Ida!" cried he, pressing her in his arms, "my heart did not deceive me!"

The timidity of our heroine was alarmed at these lively testimonies of affection; and disengaging herself from his embrace, she fell on her knees before him.

"My lord," said she, "the flattering reception with which you honour me, the goodness with which you condescend to interest yourself in my happiness,

“ nefs, lead me to believe that you will
“ not refuse to carry it one degree far-
“ ther, that my happiness may be com-
“ plete. I wish, my lord, to see my de-
“ liverer, that I may thank him : I wish
“ also to see my father whom I have lost.
“ The first I imagine can be at no great
“ distance, and to find the latter will be
“ no difficult task to a prince so powerful
“ as you.”

“ Thy deliverer ! thy father !” replied
the count ; “ behold them both in the
“ same person.”—Ida looked round and
perceived herself alone with the count,
who pressed her again to his bosom. She
looked at him with surprise, and dared
not return his caresses.—“ Thou does not
“ believe me ! thy heart speaks not for
“ me ! I am thy father. Behold this or-
“ nament, which has discovered to me
“ the secret of thy birth.”

Ida perceived in the hands of the count
the chain she had formerly given to Her-
man ; and the recollection of her lover
served still more to confound her ideas
respecting things which were not, to her,
easily comprehensible.

The count took pity on her embarrass-
ment. “ You still have doubts,” cried he :
“ I must convince you.” And ringing
a bell, the door opened, and Munster en-
tered.

Neither

Neither Munster nor the count had time to utter a syllable; for she instantly ran to throw herself into the arms of the venerable old man, exclaiming: "O my father! do I indeed see you again?"—"No, madam," answered Munster, taking her by the hand, and leading her to the count, who was at the other end of the apartment, and whose looks expressed dissatisfaction: "No, madam, that honour is too great for me; you are the daughter of this prince. I was only your foster-father, or rather to speak the truth, a ravisher, a robber. Behold, my lord," continued he, placing the left hand of Ida into the right hand of the count, "a new testimony of the truth of what I have told you. This hand still bears the mark bestowed on her when she first saw the light, and the ring also which you see cannot fail to call to your remembrance that amiable consort, to whom the birth of your daughter cost her life."—"Ah! I need no other proofs," replied the count, "than the proofs I feel in my heart, and those features, so perfectly resembling her mother's, that I cannot conceive how I have so long been blind to them. Yet certain it is, that I have ever been drawn towards her by an irresistible sympathy. You know, my child, the emotions

“ emotions that were excited in me when
“ I first heard your name, and the prefe-
“ rence with which I have distinguished
“ you from your companions, in spite of
“ your enemies.”

Joy succeeded to the astonishment of Ida. Presently she saw herself drawn irresistibly towards count Everard; she fell on his neck, round which she threw one arm, while she held out the other to Munster who was still too dear for any one to claim precedence to him in her heart. When the first transports were over, Ida requested an explanation of this mystery, which the reader perhaps is equally impatient to learn. But how can it be given satisfactorily amidst the tumult of a thousand different passions? We will chuse therefore, with thy leave, dear reader, some calmer moment to impart to thee the various circumstances of so complicated an event.

Ida perceived with regret, that Munster was far less esteemed by the count than by herself. The count regarded him as a robber who had stolen from him his child; Ida as her guardian, her faithful counsellor, her protector when abandoned by all the world beside. Count Everard was jealous of the caresses she bestowed on him; while Ida could not forget that she had so long called him by the endearing name of father. A strange circumstance! it must be

be confessed; and sure I am that many of my readers will be at a loss to comprehend how the pleasure of finding herself the daughter of a prince could fail to obliterate in her every other sentiment.

Still there remained in the breast of our heroine one desire unsatisfied, and which prevented her from fully enjoying the testimonies she received of paternal affection. She had often enquired after her defender, and shown an eagerness to see him, calling him her saviour, and expressing towards him the warmest gratitude: and as often had the count assured her that she owed her safety solely to himself. This indeed she believed from the proofs that were given her; but it did not prevent her from asking continually new questions respecting the generous stranger, who had unquestionably been the first instrument in effecting her deliverance.

As the count seemed averse to giving her the desired information, she ceased to urge him, and endeavoured to conceal her dissatisfaction, that she might not appear to repay with ingratitude the affection shown her by her new father. Munster, who, at the request of Ida, had been permitted to remain in the apartment, was silent and reserved, fearful of exciting the jealousy of the count; and the count found the caresses of his daughter cold in comparison with

with what he expected. Thus they parted for the night, pleased with having escaped past dangers, and looking forward to new enjoyments; though the sensations they felt were not altogether unmixed with bitterness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IDA received orders no more to quit the house of her father, and was conducted to her chamber, happy at length to be able to repose herself, and collect her scattered ideas, after a day of such extraordinary adventures. She soon dismissed her attendants, and flung herself dressed as she was, into a chair, to reflect anew on the incidents that had happened to her in so short a space of time. A gentle noise at the door interrupted her meditations, and instantly a man made his appearance. At first she was alarmed, and would have fled and called her servants: but the person who entered fell at her feet, laid hold of her gown, and with a voice that penetrated her inmost soul, supplicated her for a moment to listen to him.—“What voice do I hear?” exclaimed Ida: “whom do I see!”
“Herman! O Heavens! . . .”

“Yes,”

“Yes, princess, it is Herman. You see him compelled to be rash, to be importunate. But he must speak to you now, or forego the hope of it for ever.” Saying this, he gently shut the door, and approached Ida, who stood resting with her hand on a table, experiencing at once the opposite sentiments of uneasiness and joy, and not knowing how to act.

A young woman familiarised with the customary ceremonials of virtue, would have been offended at the step taken by Herman, or at least would have appeared so to be. To be alone with a lover at midnight, and the door shut, was surely enough to taint with suspicion the most unblemished reputation: but Ida, in the first transports of her joy, thought not of consequences like these. Bending towards Herman, who had embraced her knees she held out her arms, then suddenly drew them back, confused and blushing. The young knight too well guessed her intention, not to avail himself of it. He took courage therefore, and folded her in his arms; but dissatisfied with her conduct, she soon disengaged herself, and ran to a door, which led she supposed to the apartment of her women. Herman followed her, and they found themselves in a balcony, beyond which they could not pass.

“Ah!

“ Ah! do not fly from me!” said he:
“ do not reduce me to despair! I must
“ speak to you, and I hope you have suffi-
“ cient confidence in me to believe, that
“ I would not have sought you at such an
“ hour, had I any other means of inform-
“ ing you of what it is absolutely necessary
“ you should know, before a long and per-
“ haps eternal separation.”

“ An eternal separation!” said Ida in-
terrupting him, and casting her eyes on
the ground.

“ Yes, an eternal separation from him,
“ whom once you looked on with an eye
“ of favour. And has your exaltation
“ so speedily changed your sentiments?”

“ Herman,” exclaimed Ida, in the most
empassioned tone, “ you know me not.
“ Changed! changed with respect to him,
“ who, when I was so much his inferior,
“ loved me so. . . .

“ Say so ardently, so tenderly,” conti-
nued the youth, finding her hesitate; “ and
“ who, were you sovereign of the world,
“ could not love you otherwise than he
“ loved you when Ida Munster; when . . .”

“ Stop :” said the princess, with a look
of severity. “ Regard to my honour re-
“ quires, that your visit should be as short
“ as possible: leave this subject, therefore,
“ and hasten to tell me that which you say
“ it is so necessary I should know.”

Herman

Herman obeyed. They seated themselves in the balcony, which commanded a fine prospect over a retired garden, then enlightened by the moon, and he thus began :

“ It is incumbent upon me to warn you
“ not to confide too securely in your present
“ happiness. You saw what happened
“ to me, when I undertook your defence
“ before the secret tribunal”

“ What!” exclaimed Ida, “ was it you,
“ that would have died for me? You,
“ that risked every thing to save me, when
“ abandoned by all the world besides? O
“ Heavens! shall I ever be capable . . . ?
“ No never!” A flood of tears then fell
from her eyes: she raised her hands to
Heaven, and cast on Herman a look, that
forcibly expressed the emotions of her
heart.

“ You did not know it then? You were
“ not informed of it? . . . In this I clearly
“ perceive the character of the count:
“ and you see what we have . . . pardon
“ me, I meant to say . . . what I have to
“ expect from him.”

“ You must tell me, Herman, every
“ thing that has passed, from the moment
“ of our separation. The night is long;
“ we are alone; nobody will interrupt
“ us.”

Ida

Ida seemed totally to have forgotten what she had said a minute before, that regard to her honour required his visit to be brief, and Herman had no great desire of reminding her of it.

“ When I took leave of you, at Munster’s,” resumed our hero, “ or rather, when you had quitted me, cruel as appeared to me the necessity of separating myself from every thing I held dear in the world, there yet remained for me another severe stroke, to be inflicted by her, whom you called your mother. It was she who gave me the first intimation of what you have lately learnt, and of which no one is now ignorant; that it was not without reason you possessed that dignity of mien, that announces exalted rank; and that you really were, what you appeared to be, the daughter of a prince. The haste in which she was obliged to impart to me this secret, and the presence of Munster, who narrowly watched us, prevented my hearing the name of the happy mortal, who had a right to call you his daughter; and thus I found myself more uncertain than ever of what I had to hope. But we are ever ready to flatter ourselves; and, I confess, however by birth you might be exalted above me, that I was not deterred from
“ relying

“relying on my courage, and my sword,
“which I trusted would one day enable
“me to look up to the daughter of a
“prince with confidence. Vast projects
“then opened to my mind: I lost myself
“in revery, and forgot every thing; so
“that I was at some distance from Prague
“when I recollected the request of your
“supposed mother, the good Mrs. Mun-
“ster, who, when she bid me adieu, had
“urged me to remain another day, in or-
“der to second a step she meant to un-
“dertake in your favour with the em-
“peror. I returned to Prague; thence
“repaired to Conradsbourg; and thence
“to numerous other places, to which I was
“sent by persons who were playing the
“fool with me. I could meet with the
“emperor no where. My unexpected
“return, after having formally taken
“leave, and the anxiety I displayed, ex-
“cited curiosity, and exposed me to ma-
“licious remarks. The not being able
“to acquit myself better, and with less
“delay, of an affair that related to you,
“urged me to desperation. It might have
“concerned your birth, which possibly
“Mrs. Munster wished to reveal; it might
“have required the utmost promptitude;
“I was altogether in ignorance of what
“was to be done; and my extraordi-
“nary behaviour occasioned probably the
“strange

“ strange report which was circulated of
“ my being bereft of my senses: a report
“ which I first heard from the secret tri-
“ bunal, when it was alledged as one of the
“ accusations against you.

“ I imagined I had still one friend at
“ court, and of him I at length obtained
“ an audience. He advised me to de-
“ part from the country with speed, as
“ my life was not in safety, and assured
“ me, that he would discharge my com-
“ mission as faithfully as I could do it
“ myself. I have since learnt, that this
“ was intended to frighten me, in order to
“ keep me from the court, as the em-
“ peror, from whom at first my return had
“ been concealed, having at length heard
“ of it, expressed a wish to speak with me.
“ I had long been envied the feeble re-
“ mains of the favour I once enjoyed with
“ him; and the eager pursuers of his
“ smiles feared, that I should regain my
“ former influence, if I made my appear-
“ ance anew. They sought, therefore, to
“ drive me away, by the pretence, that
“ there was a design against my life; and,
“ to put an end to the questions of Win-
“ cellaus, concerning me, they spread a re-
“ port of my death, which you know pas-
“ sed for certain even with the judges of
“ the secret tribunal who pretend to be
“ ignorant of nothing.

“ I was thus induced to resume my
“ journey towards the court of king Sigis-
“ mond. There I found my old friend,
“ Nicholas Gara, the Hungarian general,
“ under whom I had served against the
“ rebels of Prague, but the extent of
“ whose power I now first learned. With
“ joy he received me into his suite. The
“ court of Hungary was preparing for a
“ war against the Turks. Sigismond had
“ lost his consort, the good queen Mary,
“ who was exceedingly beloved, and with
“ her more than half the affections of his
“ people. He was suspected even, by his
“ ill-treatment, or at least by his want of
“ kindness, of having occasioned her death.
“ He was hated: the debaucheries of his
“ court were made the subjects of the pas-
“ quinades; they styled him a second Win-
“ cessluas; and though, as I then believed,
“ he deserved but in part these reproaches,
“ he found himself under the necessity of
“ endeavouring to obliterate such unpleas-
“ ing impressions by some splendid at-
“ chievements that would add lustre to
“ his reputation. A war against the in-
“ fidels he considered as the surest way of
“ attaining his purpose, and in consequence
“ he resolved to unite with those who
“ had sworn themselves enemies to the
“ standard of Mohammed.

VOL. I.

L

“ What

“ What a prospect for one whose aim
“ was bent on glory, in order to merit
“ Ida! What laurels did I not hope to
“ gather, to what heights did I not aspire,
“ that I might raise myself, celestial maid,
“ to an equality with thee! No prince I
“ thought would hesitate to choose me for
“ his son-in-law, when, covered with the
“ blood of the infidels, and enriched with
“ their spoils, I returned to the court of
“ Sigismund, to fill the brilliant offices,
“ with which my vanity, relying on the
“ attachment of my friend Gara, flattered
“ my imagination. And perhaps these
“ hopes would have been realised, had I
“ been willing blindly to close with the
“ projects of this general, who had every
“ thing in his disposal.

“ Our march was begun, and we joined
“ the enemies of the grand seignior. We
“ attacked him vigorously, performed prodigies of valour, yet seldom came off
“ conquerors. Some malignant deity
“ seemed to reign over our fate, and to
“ snatch victory from our hands, even at
“ the moment we thought it secure.

“ Our ill success was ascribed to the secret crimes of the king; and the general
“ seemed to countenance such seditious
“ discourse. I had good reason before to
“ suspect, that Gara endeavoured to defeat the designs of his master by secretly
“ favouring

“ favouring the enemy. My suspicion
“ was converted into certainty, when he
“ disclosed to me the hatred he bore the
“ king, and attempted to detach me from
“ his interest. He was the eldest son of
“ old Nicholas Gara, whom Sigismond
“ had formerly beheaded. He therefore
“ breathed nothing but vengeance against
“ the murderer of his father; nor could
“ Sigismond have been guilty of a greater
“ imprudence, than to commit to one of
“ the sons of the deceased, the supreme
“ power over the army, and to the other,
“ Andrew Gara, the regency of the realm
“ during his absence. But the principal
“ features in Sigismond’s character are
“ openness, magnanimity, and impru-
“ dence. He delights to make reparation
“ for his faults, and he loaded his enemies
“ with honours, thinking thereby to ren-
“ der them his friends. The ill intentions
“ of the general became to me daily more
“ evident. I loved the king with all my
“ soul; and I shewed Gara, without dis-
“ guise, the horror I felt at his proposal
“ to assist him in dethroning his master.
“ Had not my youth and inexperience
“ blinded me, I had, at the commence-
“ ment of our acquaintance, sufficient rea-
“ sons to suspect his integrity. Was it
“ not he, who had formerly dared to justi-
“ fy

L 2

“ fy Winceslaus for his execrable murder
“ of the principal inhabitants of Prague!

“ I concealed not from Gara the opi-
“ nion I conceived of him. My sincerity
“ displeased him; he grew cool towards
“ me; imputed to me imaginary faults;
“ ceased to promote me; went even so
“ far as to take from me the offices I held,
“ to bestow on me others inferior to them;
“ and at length I received permission to
“ quit the army. As it was however but
“ a permission, not an order, I paid no
“ regard to it, choosing rather to serve my
“ king in the capacity of a common sol-
“ dier, than cowardly to leave him in the
“ hands of his enemies. Heavens! how
“ much did I wish to inform him of the
“ perfidy that was hatching against him!
“ But how was it to be done? All his
“ steps, as well as mine, were watched;
“ he had also been prejudiced against me;
“ and it was impossible for me to speak to
“ him in private.

“ Meanwhile I shall ever retain the pleas-
“ ing remembrance of having had it in
“ my power to render him a signal service,
“ before my destiny separated me from
“ him. According to custom, we had
“ fought bravely against the infidels, with-
“ out obtaining the victory. To lose the
“ battle was unavoidable, for so it pleased
“ Nicholas Gara. The duke of Burgun-
“ dy

“ dy had already fallen into the hands of
“ the Turks, and a similar fate threatened
“ the king. His attendants had deserted
“ him, and left him engaged in single
“ combat with the valiant Achmet, who
“ was far his superior. I had received
“ orders from the general to retire, and
“ repair to another post. But I was deaf
“ to his command, collected twenty loyal
“ Hungarians, and extricated Sigismond
“ from his perilous situation.

“ How did I regret, that I was obliged
“ almost the same instant to quit him!
“ But love called me, and I was unable
“ to resist the summons. The danger you
“ ran, dear Ida, had reached my ears: I
“ felt the necessity of saving you, and the
“ attachment I bore my king yielded to
“ the more powerful sentiment with which
“ you had inspired me. I left Sigismond,
“ however, in the protection of such faith-
“ ful subjects that no one durst openly at-
“ tempt any thing against his person. I
“ would have taken this opportunity of
“ informing him of the snares that were
“ spread for him, had he been capable of
“ listening to me; but he was grievously
“ wounded, and had a considerable fever,
“ which affected his brain. In conse-
“ quence I charged his loyal attendants
“ to communicate to him what I could
“ not, and with speed I repaired to you;

“ . . . to you, whom I knew to be threatened by the pitiless arm of the secret tribunal.”

“ May I ask,” said the princess, interrupting him, “ how, at so great a distance, you heard of my misfortune?”

“ It is a circumstance I do not yet fully understand myself: however, I will explain it to you as well as I can. You doubtless remember old Andrew, whom Munster gave me for my esquire, on my departure from Prague?”

“ Certainly I do. There were more persons than one in our house who rejoiced at the circumstance, as it freed them from the inspection of a vigilant spy, whom nothing escaped. Me you assuredly will not rank in the number of the persons who hated him: on the contrary, I esteemed him for his fidelity; though, I confess, his simplicity was so singularly contrasted with traits of apparent art and cunning, which sometimes escaped him for want of attention, that I was at a loss what to think of him.”

“ I made myself precisely the same remark, on his conduct, and he gave me a thousand occasions for repeating them. You shall hear by what extraordinary means he became the primary cause of my sudden appearance before you, and, if

“ if I may be permitted so to say, of your
“ deliverance.

“ We were arming for battle, the day
“ on which, as I have just mentioned to
“ you, I had the happiness to save the life
“ of the king. Andrew, who commonly,
“ in spite of his age, yielded not in cour-
“ age and intrepidity to the most resolute
“ of our youth, appeared, while buckling
“ on my armour, sad and dejected. ‘ Sir,’
“ said he, ‘ the road we are about to take
“ may lead to the tomb. It is possible I
“ may fall, and where can I die better than
“ in the field of honour? But in case it
“ should happen, I ought to inform you
“ of something which it imports you to
“ know. When the battle is over, do
“ not stay long in this country; I have a
“ presentiment, that things do not go so
“ well as they ought in the house of my
“ old master. The life of a person who
“ is not indifferent to you is in danger.’
“ I looked at him steadily, and asked the
“ reason of his apprehensions: but he re-
“ fused to explain himself more clearly,
“ resumed his wonted air of simplicity,
“ and attributed what he had said to some
“ melancholy dream.

“ Though I was never weak enough to
“ have faith in such things, I yet was a
“ little disturbed at what he said, and I
“ put to him fresh questions. ‘ Let us drop

“ the subject for the present,’ replied Andrew : ‘ we have now to meet the enemy. If I never return, you know enough : if I do, you will know more.’

“ The attack commenced. Andrew was one of the first who fell by my side. I directed him to be carried out of the throng, that his wounds might be dressed. The principal events of the battle I have already related ; but I have not told you, that the first news I heard, after quitting the tent of Sigismund, was the death of poor Andrew. His comrade, who came to acquaint me with it, told me, that as he was dying, he spoke of a certain lady of the name of Ida, and charged him to tell me to hasten to her succour, as she was in danger of perishing by the secret tribunal. At the same time he delivered me a billet, which the dying man had taken from his bosom, and directed him to give me, as it would inform me of the time I had for my journey, and the place where you would be found. You may easily conceive the eagerness with which I set off, without staying for further intelligence.

“ I did not reflect on the circumstances of this strange adventure till afterwards ; when I was led to believe Andrew to have belonged to that formidable society, the members of which, spread over
“ the

“ the earth, are informed, almost in the
“ twinkling of an eye, of what passes in
“ the most distant parts of their invisible
“ empire, as if they were connected to-
“ gether by some magic chain. You have
“ seen how numerous are the judges and
“ associates of this tribunal; and I have
“ reason to believe, that it has more ad-
“ herents among the people, than among
“ the nobility. Those of the former class
“ constitute the links of that immense
“ chain, the secret wheels of that fearful
“ engine, with the thousand eyes of which
“ the SEERS, as they call themselves,
“ obtain knowledge of every thing that
“ is done, and discover mysteries that seem
“ impenetrable. I doubt not but Andrew
“ was one of the associates of this class;
“ but his attachment to the family of his
“ ancient master led him, as far as he
“ could, to overstep the limits of that re-
“ ligious silence to which he was bound
“ by his oath.

“ I travelled on, without well know-
“ ing in what consisted the danger that
“ threatened you, and consequently what
“ was to be done to extricate you from it.
“ During my journey, nothing was talked
“ of but your adventure. In every town
“ and village I saw stuck up against the
“ buildings an invitation to undertake
“ your defence; and I soon learnt the

“conduct I had to pursue. There were
“two days still to intervene between the
“time of my arrival and that of your trial.
“These I spent in the manner pointed out
“to me by a man of the name of Walter,
“with whom chance brought me ac-
“quainted. I would have waited on you
“at your convent, but he dissuaded me,
“saying, that no one was admitted to de-
“fend a person accused before the secret
“tribunal, unless he could prove, that
“there had not been the most distant
“connexion between him and the party
“for the space of a year. By Walter I
“was further informed, that you had no-
“body to accompany you to the appoint-
“ed place whither the stranger came to
“fetch you; and, as it was forbidden me
“to offer you my hand, I planted myself
“on the road you were to take, that I
“might secretly watch over and protect
“you from insult. I saw you pass, ac-
“companied by the nuns, and if any thing
“could have augmented the opinion I had
“formed of you, it must have been the
“venerable attendance of those pious
“maidens, who, by the attention they paid
“you, showed in a striking manner their
“persuasion of your innocence; and I
“have also since learnt, that this proce-
“dure of the nuns made no small impres-
“sion on your judges.”

“And

“ And yet,” said Ida, interrupting him,
“ my eloquent defender was refused a
“ hearing. Matters were carried so far,
“ that he was arrested as a criminal, which,
“ I supposed, would render my justification impossible. I could not support the
“ cruel idea; I swooned at that dreadful
“ moment; and even now when I
“ think of it”

“ Who can explain all the manœuvres
“ of people who are themselves a mystery?” said Herman to the pensive and
“ dejected Ida. “For my part, I cannot;
“ and, even if I could, I still should not
“ dare. Whilst you were insensible, you
“ were carried away, and the person who
“ brought you to the tribunal set you down
“ at the place where he had received you
“ from the hands of the nuns: I know,
“ however, that he secretly watched over
“ your safety. In the mean time I was
“ interrogated, and treated with rigour.
“ I had said, that you were the daughter
“ of a prince, and I was required to prove
“ it. Of the fact I had no farther certainty
“ than the assertion of Mrs. Munster.
“ The chief of the tribunal then rose,
“ drew near to me, and, in a tone of voice
“ that betrayed the greatest emotion, put
“ to me questions, which I knew not how
“ to answer. I had been stripped, as is
“ customary on such occasions, and conducted
“ d

“ ducted before the judges with my head
“ and feet bare, and my body wrapped
“ round with woollen cloth. My cloaths
“ had been examined, and the chain you
“ formerly gave me was in the hands of
“ the president. This chain was one
“ principal subject of his questions. He
“ asked how I came by it : if I knew count
“ Everard of Wirtemberg, whose portrait
“ was fastened to it : if I had not received
“ with it a ring also : if I knew the party
“ accused : if I had ever observed on her
“ left hand a small mark, resembling a
“ cross : and if I could not guess the name
“ of the prince whose daughter she was.
“ All these questions I answered briefly
“ and ingenuously ; as well as many
“ others, particularly the following : why
“ I defended you with so much warmth :
“ whether I loved you : whether I had
“ any hopes : whether I had spoken to
“ you lately, &c. At length I was set at
“ liberty, and my cloaths were returned ;
“ but they kept the precious jewel which
“ I received from your hand, and which,
“ according to appearance, was the token
“ by which you were known. *And said*
“ I was ordered not to quit the city,
“ and to appear again the moment I
“ should be cited. This however, has
“ not taken place ; and I have just learnt,
“ in a way which I am not at liberty to
“ disclose,

“ disclose, that last night the secret tribu-
“ nal met once more on your affair, when
“ the chief arose from his throne, and an-
“ swered for your innocence, on his ter-
“ rible oath, after which you were formal-
“ ly acquitted of every accusation.

“ On the other hand, I was this morn-
“ ing sent for by the count of Wirtem-
“ berg, who gave me a very flattering re-
“ ception, informed me, that the young
“ person I had so ably defended, was dis-
“ covered to be his daughter, and, in re-
“ compence of the service I had rendered
“ him, offered me a present that did ho-
“ nour to his generosity. But, alas! the
“ words that accompanied it, were far
“ from being equally generous.

“ ‘I am not surprised,’ said he, ‘at
“ your having loved the charming Ida
“ Munster: it was natural, and suitable
“ to your station. I hope, however, that
“ you will henceforth cease to think of a
“ person, whom fortune has raised so emi-
“ nently above you, and with whom it is
“ impossible you should have the slightest
“ intercourse; particularly as you are of
“ the family of Unna, and consequently
“ related to him who attacked count Eve-
“ rard at Wisbaden.’—The answer I made
“ your proud father, was dictated by the
“ rage that possessed me. We parted
“ highly displeased with each other. He
“ sent

“ sent me his humiliating present, which
“ I instantly returned. In no case would
“ I have accepted a reward for saving
“ your life, and much less in this.”

Herman had risen from his seat, and was walking with hasty strides backwards and forwards in the balcony. Ida perceived how much he was offended; she was herself also extremely agitated, if not by anger, at least by secret dissatisfaction, which prevented her speaking, lest she should betray the sentiments she felt.

“ Sir,” said she at length, with a trembling voice, “ I imagine you have finished the recital of your adventures: day is on the point of appearing; we must part; and you have not yet informed me of the motive of your visit. You said, that you had to tell me of a danger with which I was threatened, or”

“ Oh Ida!” cried Herman, approaching her, with an accent of the most endearing tenderness: “ Do you perceive no danger in what I have related? If there be none to you, to me at least there is that of an eternal separation. And is the fate of him to whom you is the fate of Herman become so indifferent to you? Meanwhile,” continued he, whilst Ida timidly drew back from him, “ this is not all I have to tell you: hear what
“ has

“ has happened to me to-day, and judge
“ what you have to do.

“ When I quitted the count, your
“ father, though he deserves not the ap-
“ pellation, I met the honest Munster.
“ Alas! he too has treated me with seve-
“ rity, yet I would to heaven you were still
“ his daughter! I related to him what
“ had passed between me and him, of
“ whom my lips wish not to pronounce the
“ name; and I was desirous also of giving
“ him an account of what had previouly
“ happened to me, but he appeared to be
“ in a great measure already acquainted
“ with it. At length he took me home
“ with him, and satisfied all my ques-
“ tions concerning you, as far as was in his
“ power. His sole motive for quitting
“ you so hastily at the convent, was to go
“ in quest of me, to demand the chain,
“ which you informed him was in my pos-
“ session, and which was necessary to prove
“ your birth. But soon relinquishing this
“ design, the execution of which would
“ have required too much time, he formed
“ another project for your deliverance. I
“ cannot say, with certainty, what this pro-
“ ject was, as he did not fully explain him-
“ self on the subject. As far however as I
“ can judge from appearances, it is pro-
“ bable he took some steps to be admitted
“ into the number of associates of the se-
“ cret

“cret tribunal, as he had heard, that an
“oath taken by a free judge, in affirmation of the innocence of a person accused, was sufficient for his acquittal. Munster was little aware of the difficulty of being admitted a member of this terrible tribunal; that it was previously necessary to be put to the proof, and to fill inferior stations, before he could arrive to any influence in it: and this required time, whereas your situation demanded the most speedy succour. But as he had taken the first steps, he could not be permitted to retract, and was kept in confinement. Unable therefore, to seek any means of delivering his dear Ida, he found himself obliged to abandon to Providence her fate.

“At this juncture I arrived. He knew that I was here, yet was not at liberty to speak to me. I declared to the judges, what I had heard of your birth. He, who had hitherto passed for your father, was interrogated on the subject, and obliged to appear before the count of Wirtemberg, who, in all appearance, is the chief of the secret tribunal in this district; for I perfectly recollect his voice and gait, in spite of his disguise.

“The answers of Munster removed every doubt respecting your birth; and
“the

“ the count was so firmly convinced of
“ the innocence of his daughter, that he
“ hesitated not an instant to make himself
“ responsible for it. What has since been
“ executed, was then resolved on, and
“ you were set free. The greater part of
“ this account I have received from a per-
“ son whom I dare not name, for the dis-
“ courages of the reserved Munster turned
“ chiefly on the necessity of renouncing
“ you, and the impossibility of my at-
“ tachment ever being crowned with suc-
“ cess.

“ ‘ You know,’ said he, ‘ the observa-
“ tions I often made on the subject, when
“ you believed me to be the father of Ida:
“ you would not then give credit to them,
“ yet now you must be convinced they were
“ well-founded. I will not inquire whe-
“ ther a princess of Wirtemberg be too
“ elevated a match for you: but you can-
“ not conceal from yourself the deter-
“ mined enmity of count Everard to your
“ house. Though you took no part in the
“ affair of Wisbaden, he will never forgive
“ you, for the crimes of your relations.
“ Beside, he has other views for his daugh-
“ ter. As he has little hope himself of at-
“ taining the first dignity in the empire,
“ he wishes at least to be allied to him, to
“ whom it is probably destined. Now it is
“ generally supposed, that duke Frederic
“ of

“ of Brunswic, will one day ascend the
“ throne of Bohemia; and him therefore
“ has count Everard chosen for his son-in-
“ law. Death lately deprived the count of
“ a daughter, whose hand had been pro-
“ mised to the duke; it will therefore, he
“ thinks, be easy to substitute Ida in her
“ place; and as Ida is far superior in
“ beauty, the execution of this scheme
“ appears to him certain. After this,
“ would you prevent the happiness of her
“ you love? Would you take from her
“ the prospect of wearing the first diadem
“ in the world?”

“ I will not repeat to you, the an-
“ swer I made: it is of little import-
“ ance. But permit me, madam, to ask
“ you one question: Are you inclined to
“ give your hand to a prince, who knows
“ you not? To a man, who, should he
“ prefer you, will be determined only by
“ reasons of state? To a man, who hav-
“ ing placed elsewhere his affections, des-
“ pised and treated with neglect your
“ sister, whose hand was offered to him,
“ and probably caused her to die of grief?
“ To a man, in short, who, if dazzled by
“ your charms, he experience for you sen-
“ timents more tender than those with
“ which she inspired him, will not fail to
“ give you rivals, who”

Redoubled

Redoubled knocks at the door of Ida's chamber interrupted the conversation of the two lovers, and alarmed them extremely. The princess hastily quitted the balcony, and rushed to the door. Heavens! it was her father.

"What!" said he, with a look of astonishment: "so early! day scarcely broken, and dressed already!"

"My father, I am I am accustomed to rise early."

"You were in the balcony. Where are your women? You were talking: are you also accustomed to talk to yourself?"

These questions threw Ida into the most cruel perplexity; she knew not what she ought to say; and had her father put to her a single question more, he would have learnt all, that, under the present circumstances, it was so important to conceal from him. But fortunately, too eager to continue coolly this examination, he flew to the balcony. Finding no one there, he returned perfectly calm, and begged the trembling Ida, who durst not yet look up to him, no more to expose herself to the chill morning air, and still less to the tongue of calumny, by talking to herself, as she had done. "The little sleep you have taken," added he, "has made you pale; you have deranged my projects; I intended to-day to have presented you at
" court,

"court, but I perceive that you must have
"another day to recover yourself."

He then embraced her tenderly, and begged her to go to bed again, as the sun was scarcely risen, and she had need of repose.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SATISFIED at being so happily extricated from the awkward situation in which she found herself, Ida ran to the balcony, to see what was become of Herman. He had disappeared. She could form no conjecture, but that he had ventured to leap from it into the garden, to escape the count, whose voice he no doubt heard. She looked down: all was quiet and motionless, except that, at a distance, she perceived a sentinel parading backwards and forwards, which rendered her uneasy about the escape of her lover, and the injury her reputation might suffer. "Alas!" said she, with a sigh "must the
"great every where have witnesses of
"their most secret actions? And can they
"never be permitted to do any thing
"without being observed, or at least
"without

“ without being under constraint? How
“ preferable was the peaceful life I led in
“ the house of Munster, to the humiliat-
“ ing confinement in which it appears I
“ am to be held here; a confinement
“ even greater than what I experienced
“ at the court of the empress!”

Ida willingly followed the advice of her father, in retiring to bed; for she had need of repose: but the reflections that occupied her mind totally prevented her from sleeping. Having remained some time in bed to no purpose, she at length resolved to rise and call her women. That day she received no visit: the count of Wirtemberg himself came to see her but for a moment. She was melancholy and dejected, and durst not compare her present situation with that she had quitted, lest she should find the comparison too unfavourable to the former. The sole circumstances from which she derived consolation, were the thought of the danger she had just escaped, and her present security; the shame and disgrace to which she had been exposed, and her innocence now acknowledged: her heart then palpitated with joy and gratitude to heaven, and the person whom next to heaven she considered as her saviour. The narrative of Herman afforded her matter for fresh reflections; and these were insensibly replaced by the tender remembrance

membrance of the empress, to whom she was next day to be presented. To behold Sophia, to see her again after being completely justified, to relate what she had suffered for love of her, and to humble her enemies by the lustre of her innocence and her rank, formed such a prospect, that Ida must have been more than woman, nay, more than mortal, to have been indifferent to its enjoyment.

The wished-for day appeared. Ida was dressed in a manner suitable to her rank. She was naturally beautiful: and the impression of her late sorrow, which was yet not entirely obliterated, served but to render her more interesting.

Count Everard had acquainted the empress with his intention of presenting to her his daughter. The princess of Ratibor was accordingly deputed to fetch the young princess of Wirtemberg, in Sophia's state coach, and to assure her of the impatience with which she expected her. Who has not seen, who does not know, how brazen is the forehead of an experienced courtier? The princess of Ratibor felt no embarrassment from the commission with which she was charged to her, whom she had so cruelly injured: and the sole vengeance that the noble-minded Ida took of the impudence, with which she pretended to participate in her unexpected happiness.

happiness, was a look of disdainful pity, which she cast on her enemy.

The count, however, was not equally forbearing. The character of envoy from the empress, in which the princess of Ratibor appeared, had some restraint upon him; but he said enough to remind her of the infamous part she had acted with regard to his daughter; and the princess of Ratibor, for the first time in her life, habituated as she was to dissimulation, knew not how to act.

The princess of Wirtemberg was received in the empress's antechamber by the duke of Bavaria. He embraced her, and made an apology for having been so slow in perceiving her innocence. The great have the privilege, or at least fancy they have the privilege, of making reparation for every injury by a few civil expressions. But Ida paid little attention to what was said by the duke, for her heart was on the wing to meet Sophia, who, still somewhat feeble from her illness, was sitting at the farther end of the chamber, and, attempting to rise, held out her arms to her young friend.

The daughter of the count threw herself at her feet.—“Pure, spotless soul!” cried the empress, pressing her to her bosom: “how much hast thou suffered for the love of me! how hast thou support-
“ed

“ed it? woe to those who availed themselves of my weak state, to seek the ruin of my best and dearest friend.”

Ida bathed the knees of her sovereign with her tears. “Rise,” said Sophia, “rise: that posture becomes only your persecutors. How I regret, that they are in reality forced to pay to your rank that respect which they owe to your innocence; how I regret, that you are no longer Ida Munster, that I might raise you to the height of my wishes! Why has fortune done what I could so ardently have desired to do for you myself!”

Joy rendered Sophia eloquent, while it bereft Ida of words; probably because she felt it more forcibly than the empress. In fact, few persons were capable of loving like her; and the lively remembrance of her misfortunes, and her glorious deliverance contributed, perhaps, still farther to heighten the intensity of her feelings.

The empress ordered all the ladies of the court to embrace the princess of Wirtemberg. The princess of Ratibor and her daughter, whose yellow and livid visages betrayed the envy that inwardly gnawed their hearts, presented themselves foremost; the rest followed with an air of somewhat less constraint; nor was there one, who did not assure the charming Ida, that she had obtained nothing more than

she merited, and that, the day they first beheld her, they could not help confessing, that she was worthy of, and would do honour to the most elevated rank.

Sophia, who was not ignorant of their jealousies and secret persecutions, smiled with an air of disdain, and bad them retire, as she wished to be alone with the duke of Bavaria, count Everard and his daughter.

Our manuscript does not inform us what subject engaged the attention of these four personages; but it says that the conversation did not become truly interesting till Sophia and Ida were left by themselves; and that then took place between them, all the reciprocal endearments, all the tender effusions, usually felt by two hearts, formed for each other, when having been separated by misfortune, they find themselves happily reunited. Ida remarked too, though Sophia would not acquiesce in the truth of the observation, that her friend opened her heart with much less reserve to the princess of Wirtemberg, than to the humble Ida Munster, a discovery which it is not possible for us to say whether it afforded her greater pain or pleasure.

Certain however it is that this Renewal of friendship so transported the new princess, that she hesitated not, in her turn,

to disclose her inmost thoughts to Sophia; nor was even her love for Herman, or the late nocturnal visit he had paid her, omitted: she allowed herself only a few alterations and curtailments, as there were circumstances in the case that related not to herself alone, and which she knew not how they might be received.

Sophia promised to favour, with all her influence, her friend's attachment to Herman. Obligated to become the wife of Winceslaus, she had perhaps frequently lamented that she had not herself enjoyed the liberty of chusing a husband; it may be presumed, therefore, that she meant to keep her word, and that she was anxious to devise the surest means of arriving at the desired end.

Ida's ascendancy over the empress was unbounded, and she could do with her as she pleased. By her recommendation, Munster was called to court and loaded with favours: a circumstance by no means to be wondered at, when we consider the grateful and feeling heart of her who had so long thought herself his daughter, and which we should scarcely have mentioned, had it not led to a recital which we shall no longer detain from the reader. Sophia was as curious as perhaps, he may be, to hear the history of the infancy of her friend, and the manner in which she had
been

been taken from her parents; and one day, therefore, when Munster found himself alone with Ida and the empress, they requested him to relate the particulars of this history, a request with which he complied, as will be seen in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXV.

HISTORY OF THE INFANCY OF IDA.

“O PRINCESS,” said Munster, after some moments of reflection, “what a task
“do you impose upon a man who values
“so highly your affection, and the favour of the empress! You require me
“to confess faults that will perhaps ruin
“me in your esteem. They have plunged
“you into an abyss of misfortune, and
“have no other excuse but my blind
“regard for a woman, who, beautiful as
“Eve, might well seduce to evil a frail
“child of Adam. You, Ida, know her
“whom you believed to be your mother,
“and can judge, from what she is now,
“how beautiful she must have been at
“four and twenty. I loved her; but
M 2 “the

“ the difference of our conditions render-
“ ed my happiness next to impossible. I
“ was one of the principal officers of the
“ count of Wirtemberg, and Maria was
“ a vassal. Become at so early an age a
“ widow, the death of her husband and
“ of her only child, an infant at the breast,
“ excited compassion, and she was taken
“ into the service of the countess, as the
“ nurse of her daughter. Ida was but
“ a few weeks old when her mother died.
“ Maria before the death of her mistress,
“ had been promised her liberty, and
“ the office of nurse to the young prin-
“ cess giving her a farther claim to the
“ favour, increased the hopes of my love.
“ Unfortunately the welfare of their de-
“ pendants is generally deemed of too tri-
“ vial importance to merit the attention of
“ princes. A single word would have
“ made two human beings happy, and
“ fixed indelible impressions of gratitude
“ in our hearts : but that word was with-
“ held. I was sent to a distance from the
“ place where the object of my wishes re-
“ sided ; and she was treated with a seve-
“ rity that excited in her breast feelings of
“ hatred, and urged her to a step, which
“ had she not been provoked by ill treat-
“ ment, she would never have taken.
“ The charming little Ida, admired by
“ every body, and adored by her nurse,
“ was

“ was scarcely two years old, when the
“ deceased countess of Wirtemberg was
“ already forgotten, and the count had
“ chosen, to fill her place, a young wo-
“ man whose beauty and rank were her
“ only pretensions.

“ Her sentiments were sufficiently unge-
“ nerous to separate from the title of wife
“ of count Everard, that of mother to his
“ children. She loved, or at least pre-
“ tended to love, the first while the others
“ she detested. Maria, who contrived
“ sometimes the means of writing to me
“ by stealth acquainted me with the evil
“ proceedings of this step-mother. The
“ sons of her husband, who began to grow
“ up, were sent to the army, equipped in-
“ a manner unsuitable to their rank. No
“ attention was paid to their youth and in-
“ experience which demanded some indul-
“ gence. His daughters were shamefully
“ obtruded upon inferior princes, who
“ married them solely from the considera-
“ tion of their birth. It was evidently the
“ intention of the new countess to increase
“ her fortune at the expence of the chil-
“ dren of her husband. The youngest but
“ one of these children, died for want of
“ care, and Maria did not fail to impute to
“ the wickedness of the step-mother this
“ accident, as well as the ill health of Ida,
“ whom she asserted it was the wish of the
M 3 “ countess

“ countess privately to get rid of: accu-
“ fations perhaps totally devoid of proof,
“ and which nothing but the infatuation of
“ love could have induced me to credit.

“ One day I was invited by Maria, to
“ repair secretly to the count's in order
“ to advise with her about the means of
“ saving her little favourite, and removing
“ the obstacles that opposed themselves to
“ our union. The latter became daily
“ more difficult, from the severity of the
“ countess, who continually protracted the
“ emancipation of Maria, and at last ab-
“ solutely refused to consent to it.

“ The letter which she sent me was dated
“ at Wisbaden where the count then re-
“ sided with his court. He had retired
“ thither, after the long, and in some re-
“ spects, unfortunate war he had waged
“ with the imperial cities, in order to en-
“ joy a little repose. As I had positive
“ orders from my master, not to quit the
“ place where I was stationed, it was ne-
“ cessary that my arrival should be con-
“ cealed; so that we could meet only at
“ night, when we had no other witness
“ than the little Ida, who, since the preg-
“ nancy of her step-mother, was less no-
“ ticed than ever. She was kept shut up
“ like a prisoner, with her nurse, in a re-
“ mote apartment, where they were fre-
“ quently

“quently suffered to be in want almost of
“the necessaries of life.

“Our secret conversations were not
“solely occupied by the unfortunate cir-
“cumstances of our attachment. The des-
“tiny of Ida was much more alarming to
“Maria than her own. ‘Munster,’ said
“she, ‘you must not flatter yourself that
“I will ever assent to any project for our
“union till this infant is in safety. You
“must either save us both, or renounce
“me for ever. Poor little innocent,’ added
“she, pressing Ida to her bosom, who was
“asleep in her arms, ‘shall I abandon
“thee! shall I leave thee in the hands of
“thy step-mother! shall I suffer the fee-
“ble spark of life that remains in thee to
“be extinguished by neglect. Look, my
“friend, at this pale and emaciated coun-
“tenance! Who would suppose it to be
“the little cherub, the once rosy and
“healthful Ida? And yet she eats nothing
“that I do not prepare with my own hands.
“No doubt the air we breathe in this place
“is empoisoned. I dread the very looks
“of this abominable countess, lest they
“should wither this delicate flower. It is
“true that, at present, she avoids the
“child; but should she seek her, I should
“shudder at her perfidious caresses, think-
“ing every embrace was intended to stifle
“her.’

“ Love and mistrust sharpened the feel-
“ ings of Maria. Every day she fancied
“ that she discovered new proofs of the
“ countess’s cruelty, and maintained, that
“ when she became a mother, things
“ would be worse; that the count, would
“ feel himself less interested than at present
“ for the fate of his daughter, and that
“ she would indubitably be sacrificed to
“ the offspring of her step-mother.

“ It was easy to divine what were Ma-
“ ria’s intentions. She wished, that by
“ some daring attempt, I should procure
“ her her liberty and save the princess
“ from the danger that impended over her,
“ by taking her with us. On these con-
“ ditions alone would she give me her
“ hand. I loved the little Ida, but I could
“ not resolve to steal her from her father,
“ and thus deprive her of the rights of her
“ birth. Things did not appear so despe-
“ rate as Maria had represented. I attri-
“ buted part of her apprehensions to her
“ extreme fondness for the child, and her
“ no less ardent antipathy to her who oc-
“ cupied the place of her former mistress,
“ towards whom she preserved the firmest
“ attachment. I hoped that the fate of the
“ young princess would be meliorated in a
“ way more honourable and just; and I
“ resolved never to commit a theft, which
“ I con-

“ I considered as of the number of those
“ that ought never to be pardoned.

“ An unexpected event induced me to
“ change my opinion, and realised the pro-
“ ject of Maria, without its being neces-
“ sary to take the smallest precaution.
“ What shall I say? Love and compassion
“ vanquished my scruples; I was imposed
“ on by the semblance of an order from
“ Heaven; my mistress was sufficiently
“ adroit to avail herself of my weakness;
“ and I determined on that dangerous step,
“ which has since occasioned me such
“ pangs of remorse, and the princess such
“ a multitude of evils; a step of which, I
“ trust, the melancholy consequences are
“ now at an end.

“ Afraid of being known, I had taken up
“ my residence at the distance of a league
“ from Wiesbaden. Every evening, as
“ soon as it was dark, I set out to visit
“ Maria, and that I might not be surprised
“ by the approach of day, returned after
“ a conversation of a few hours, assuredly
“ the happiest of my life. I constantly,
“ in my way, passed through a forest, con-
“ sidered by the country people as the
“ haunt of malignant spirits, and which I
“ should never have dared to enter, had I
“ not been supported by the invincible
“ courage that love can inspire. Indeed

“ I had particular reasons to avoid it, as
“ frequently things had happened to me
“ there, for which I knew not how to ac-
“ count.

“ God knows, said I more than once
“ to Maria, what passes in the bosom of
“ that forest. Lonesome as it is by day, at
“ night it swarms with living beings. I
“ hear in it a confused hum of voices,
“ spectres pass and repass: sometimes they
“ come so near, that they seem to touch
“ me. But, thank Heaven, they do no
“ injury to the harmless traveller; so I let
“ them pass, cross myself, and pretend not
“ to see them.

“ One night that I had quitted Maria
“ earlier than usual, on account of the in-
“ disposition of Ida, which would not per-
“ mit us to have any conversation, I made
“ a discovery, that removed my doubts
“ respecting that solitary wood.

“ It was one of those dark nights in au-
“ tumn, when the fogs are so thick as to-
“ tally to obscure the light both of the
“ moon and stars. A dank vapour over-
“ spread the earth; I walked as in a cloud;
“ and could perceive nothing but occasi-
“ onal sparks of fire, rising suddenly into
“ the air, which might be occasioned, I
“ thought, by an *ignis fatuus*, or some-
“ thing still worse.

“ I was

“ I was blindly groping out the path I
“ had so frequently trod, when stumbling
“ against a tree, I fell prostrate on the
“ ground. I rose to resume my way, but
“ soon found I had totally lost the track
“ I had hitherto pursued. Fearing that I
“ should plunge deeper in the forest, and
“ fall into some of the dangerous places
“ with which I had been told it abounded,
“ I resolved to wait for day, and pass
“ the night on the spot where I was, endeavouring to collect for my couch
“ what dry branches I could find in the
“ dark.

“ I had scarcely rested myself an hour,
“ when I heard the noise, that had so frequently alarmed me, and which at a
“ distance resembled the march of a body
“ of men clad in armour. They seemed
“ to approach, to separate, to rest, and
“ then to begin their march again. I fancied they took different roads, and soon
“ I distinguished the voices of two of
“ those beings, whom I had hitherto
“ supposed to be sprites. They stopped
“ just behind the bush, under which I was
“ lying; and I then found, that those
“ voices of which the echo of the wood
“ had conveyed to my ears but inarticulate sounds, pronounced a language like
“ my own. This discovery changed my
“ opinion, concerning the nature of the
“ person.

“ persons with whom I had to deal, for I
“ had always conceived, that the peace-
“ able inhabitants of the invisible world
“ must have some other mode of com-
“ municating their ideas, than the use of
“ human speech.

“ My courage now began to return; I
“ listened with eager attention, that my
“ ears might supply the deficiency of my
“ eyes; and I was soon completely con-
“ vinced, that those phantoms, at which
“ I had been so often intimidated, were
“ no other than men like myself. They
“ complained of the badness of the wea-
“ ther, cursed their masters, and expressed
“ their impatience for the arrival of day.
“ I was on the point of discovering my-
“ self, that I might abridge the tedious-
“ ness of the night by conversation, when
“ a few words which they dropped made
“ me first wish to know more concern-
“ ing them, and in consequence I en-
“ deavoured to approach nearer.

“ ‘What noise did I hear?’ cried one
“ of them. ‘Something certainly stirred
“ behind the bush. Is the man, who
“ crosses the wood, gone by?’

“ ‘Once,’ answered the other: ‘and
“ he commonly does not return till near
“ sun-rise. Besides, he never does harm
“ to

“to any body, so you have nothing to
“fear, even were it he.”

““But perhaps, it is John Herdsman,
“who, they say, was executed here.
“Wherever I meet him, I turn out of his
“way, and pray for his soul.”

““May God forgive him!” resumed
“the second in a tone of affright: ‘See!
“he is dressed in white, except that his
“collar is stained with blood. Poor soul!
“perhaps he was innocent.’”

““These words, and some others simi-
“lar to them, induced me to believe, that
“my neighbours were talking of me.
“My white cloak with a red collar was
“plainly described, and I could not avoid
“laughing to myself, to think I was act-
“ing the part of a sprite to those, who
“had so long acted it toward me.”

““Did not I hear the spirit laugh?”
“continued one of them. ‘He is endea-
“vouring to provoke us: let us get out
“of his way.’”

““We dare not quit our station: you
“know we must wait here for our mas-
“ters.”

““Are they gone again, do you think,
“to Wisbaden?”

““Yes: God knows what will be the
“end of this enterprise.”

“Some other persons arrived soon after,
“and my neighbours relinquished to them
“their

“ their places, after having spread their
“ cloaks under the trees for them to re-
“ pose on. My new companions ordered
“ the former to retire, and I found myself
“ within hearing of a conversation far
“ more interesting than the preceding
“ one, and which indeed so engaged my
“ attention, that I was on the point of be-
“ traying myself.

“ I learned that they had formed the
“ design of surprising the count of Wir-
“ temberg at Wisbaden, where he believ-
“ ed himself in security. One of them,
“ whom I judged from his discourse to be
“ the commander of a numerous band,
“ frankly confessed, that he was not
“ tempted, like his followers, by the hope
“ of the immense booty they must infal-
“ libly gain; but that all his desires cen-
“ tered in the beautiful wife of count
“ Everard, by whom he had formerly
“ been beloved, and who, in a fit of dis-
“ gust, had since given her hand to the
“ count.

“ My attention was every moment more
“ and more excited; for one calculated
“ the number of count Everard's enemies,
“ while another recited their names,
“ amongst which were two of the house
“ of Unna, the father and the brother of
“ Herman. When the dawn began to
“ peep, a greater number appeared, and
“ a coun-

“ a council was held. Two of them re-
“ lated what they had observed at Wisba-
“ den: the day of attack was fixed, and,
“ to my distraction, it was the day that
“ was then approaching. Instantly I
“ formed the resolution of warning the
“ count of his danger; but to enable
“ him to escape not a moment was to be
“ lost.

“ Without allowing myself farther time
“ for reflection, I rose gently, resolving,
“ to avail myself of the error into which
“ the servants had fallen respecting me,
“ and of which I had perceived some traces
“ in the conversation of their masters. I
“ turned my coat, that its red lining might
“ appear the more terrible, and slowly
“ stalked across a path, that led close by
“ them. I found that they perceived me,
“ notwithstanding the gloom of the wood,
“ and that my appearance occasioned a
“ general alarm. They were all at once
“ dumb, as if struck with thunder, and I
“ was at some distance when I heard the
“ following words: ‘ It is almost day,
“ and yet there is the spectre gone by!
“ he is in red too; an omen that can
“ bode no good: we shall certainly have
“ a bloody day.’

“ As soon as I was out of their sight,
“ I quickened my pace, and arrived al-
“ most breathless at Wisbaden. I de-
“ manded

“ manded to speak to the count. The
“ persons in waiting were astonished to
“ see me, and ran instantly to tell him,
“ that Munster, who was supposed to be
“ in Italy, was arrived, and announced
“ his having something of importance to
“ communicate.

“ I was well received by the count,
“ though I had returned without his per-
“ mission. Well knowing my fidelity,
“ he presumed, that I had not quitted
“ my post without reason. I spoke not,
“ therefore, of the real motives of my
“ journey, but instantly disclosed the plot
“ I had overheard in the forest from the
“ knights of St. Martin (a name they as-
“ sumed from having formed their design
“ on the eve of that saint), and the mo-
“ ment when they intended to put it into
“ execution.

“ Unfortunately I related also what the
“ discarded lover of the countess of Wir-
“ temberg had said of his former intima-
“ cy with her : and the countess was pre-
“ sent. She pretended, that I insulted
“ her, and that my whole story was a
“ falsehood fabricated for some ill design ;
“ declaring that she had not been ignor-
“ ant of my arrival, notwithstanding all
“ my precautions to keep it secret ; that
“ several of her people had seen me for
“ some days roaming about the neigh-
“ bourhood,

“bourhood, and adding many other complaints of a similar nature, which so prejudiced the count against all I could say, that he gave orders for my being imprisoned.

“Conceive what must have been my situation. Not only was I suspected by my master, and punished for having fulfilled the duty of a faithful subject; but I beheld the count himself, through his own fault, exposed to the most imminent danger, and with him my Maria, and the dear infant whom she loved more than life.

“The hour of attack arrived. My heart audibly palpitated within me. Yet I received a sort of consolation; when I heard in the court of the castle the sound of horses and carriages, and the clamour of people who seemed eager to go out: for I then supposed my information had not been wholly disregarded, and that it was still possible the object of my love might be saved.

“To this tumult a profound silence succeeded, that strengthened my hopes, and rendered me more tranquil: but soon the clashing of arms and neighing of steeds informed me, that the knights of St. Martin were engaged in their attempt.

“I was

“ I was perfectly ignorant of what passed, except that I could hear the groans of the dying, and the shouts of the victors, when, on a sudden, some words, that confusedly struck my ears, led me to suppose, that the conquerors were resolved to crown their enterprize, by committing the castle to the flames. The threat chilled my blood; and my senses presently told me, that it was actually carried into execution. The smoke entered the little grated window of my dungeon, which was illumined by the light of the conflagration. A prisoner, I was left to perish without succour, unless some miracle should come to my deliverance.

“ Not conceiving myself sufficiently favoured by Heaven to expect such an event, I tried the strength of my own shoulders in bursting the door of my prison, and succeeded. Traversing the subterraneous passage that led to it, I reached one of the courts of the castle. One wing was entirely in flames; my eyes mechanically turned to the other, in which was the apartment of Maria. This too the flames had already caught in several places. ‘ Fortunately,’ said I within myself, ‘ she is safe: for there can be no doubt but she was amongst those, who fled in time from the danger.

“ But

“ But has she actually escaped? added I,
“ as if by secret inspiration! and without
“ further reflection I flew to the place,
“ which I had never before visited with
“ similar feelings, hoping not to find in
“ it my Maria.

“ In fact, that part of the castle was suf-
“ ficiently quiet; I saw nobody; but the
“ smoke and the heat were scarcely sup-
“ portable. ‘ Surely Maria cannot be
“ here alone, when all the rest of the fa-
“ mily have escaped,’ whispered the de-
“ sire of self-preservation, roused by the
“ danger that threatened me at every step:
“ but love spoke in a louder tone, boldly
“ urging me on in despite of peril; and
“ love was victorious. I was determined
“ to be convinced by my own eyes, and
“ I hastened to ascend the hundred steps,
“ that led to the miserable apartment of
“ my mistress. As I drew near, I heard
“ the plaintive cries of an infant. I re-
“ doubled my speed, and soon distinguish-
“ ed the voice of the little Ida. Arrived
“ at the door distraction! it was fas-
“ tened within. The bolts, however,
“ gave way to my exertions, and I found
“ Maria extended senseless on the floor.
“ The window, at which no doubt she had
“ attempted to escape, but had been ter-
“ rified by its height, was open, and the
“ child had crawled along the floor to her
“ nurse,

“ nurse, whom she endeavoured to awake
“ with crying. What a spectacle! . . .
“ But I stopped not long to contemplate
“ it. I threw Maria across my shoulders,
“ took the infant in my arms, and having
“ thus gained the court in safety, I set
“ down my burden to take breath. It
“ seemed as if an angel had lent me wings,
“ so difficult did it appear, without super-
“ natural assistance, to have passed unhurt
“ through those volumes of flame and of
“ smoke, that on all sides surrounded
“ me.

“ Maria coming to herself, we seized
“ the first moment of her being able to
“ walk to remove from this place of ter-
“ ror; for, large as was the court, we
“ were far from being in safety there.
“ We soon gained the forest, to which,
“ the night before, these incendiary ban-
“ ditti had resorted, and there we ventur-
“ ed to take a little rest, believing ourselves
“ secure from the fire and sword of the
“ enemy.

“ I asked Maria how it had been possi-
“ ble for her and the young princess to
“ have been thus cruelly abandoned. By
“ her answers I found, that she knew no-
“ thing of what had passed; that the sight
“ of the flames alone had informed her
“ of the danger that threatened her life;
“ that she had in vain called for assistance,
“ begging,

“ begging the door might be opened ;
“ that she had attempted to leap out of
“ the window ; and, that, at length, find-
“ ing herself lost without resource, she had
“ swooned with despair.

“ It was not till afterwards that I learnt
“ the true circumstances of the affair.
“ Count Everard, deceived by his wife,
“ God knows with what view, gave no
“ credit to my information till some hours
“ after my imprisonment. It was then
“ confirmed by a neighbouring shepherd,
“ who, as well as I, had discovered the
“ project of the knights of St. Martin, and
“ hastened to inform the count. He then
“ lost not a moment in endeavouring to
“ place his family in safety, while he de-
“ termined himself to remain in his castle,
“ assemble his men, and wait the approach
“ of the enemy. The shepherd offered
“ himself as a guide to the fugitives, and
“ to conduct them, by a secret road, over
“ the hills. The count, as he hastily
“ took leave of his wife, ordered her to
“ take with her every thing that was
“ worth carrying off, and repaired im-
“ mediately to his post. The countess
“ obeyed her husband’s injunctions ; she
“ left behind her nothing she thought
“ worthy her care ; the little Ida was for-
“ gotten by mistake, or perhaps by de-
“ sign ; a circumstance not to be wonder-
“ ed.

“ ed at, if we consider the sentiments and
“ feelings of this cruel stepmother.

“ Of all this, however, Maria was ig-
“ norant. She remarked, indeed, that
“ there was a bustle in the court, into
“ which her window looked, and prepa-
“ rations making for a journey: but she
“ supposed it to be nothing more than one
“ of those visits, that were occasionally
“ paid to the gentlemen's seats in the
“ neighbourhood; during which she and
“ her charge always enjoyed greater li-
“ berty, and which of course she beheld
“ with sensations of pleasure. Besides the
“ height of her apartment was too great
“ to suffer her to hear what was said be-
“ low, as was the court too distant from
“ the principal front of the castle, for
“ her to perceive the attack of the ene-
“ my.

“ The little she heard, however, render-
“ ed her sufficiently curious to endeavour
“ to get out of the prison allotted for her
“ residence; but she found the door fas-
“ tened; at this she was by no means sur-
“ prised, as it frequently happened when
“ the countess was in an ill humour. She
“ waited therefore, hoping that the girl,
“ who usually brought her supper, would
“ tell her what was going forward. The
“ girl did not make her appearance: it
“ grew late: Maria and the little Ida, to
“ whom

“ whom it had before happened more than
“ once to go to bed supperless, fell asleep,
“ and were at length awakened by the fire.
“ In vain she sought to escape; despair
“ and terror bereft her of all sensation;
“ and when she awoke from her swoon,
“ she saw herself saved, saved by me,
“ without knowing the occasion of the
“ danger she had run, or the manner in
“ which she had been extricated from it.

“ After having entered into a full ex-
“ planation of all these subjects, we began
“ to form schemes for our future conduct.
“ Mine were totally repugnant to those
“ of Maria. I insisted on Ida's being re-
“ stored to her father, while she, exasper-
“ ated at the barbarity with which the
“ poor child had been deserted, swore,
“ that she would never more have inter-
“ course with me, if I persisted in my de-
“ sign.

“ To those, who do me the honour to
“ listen to my narrative, I leave it to be
“ decided, whether, as Maria declared to
“ me, to deliver the young princess into
“ the hands of her stepmother, and to de-
“ prive her of life, would not be one and
“ the same thing. For my own part, I
“ was then of a different opinion. I con-
“ fided in count Everard's affection for
“ his daughter, and hoped, that he would
“ become a more active protector of her
“ helpless

“helpless infancy, when his eyes were
“opened to the perfidious designs of his
“wife. Necessity, however, conspired
“with love, to prevent, the performance
“of what appeared to me so just. I could
“not bear the thoughts of renouncing
“Maria; and to join count Everard, and
“restore to him his daughter, was for
“the present impracticable. The knights
“of St. Martin so infested the roads,
“that every passage was intercepted; and
“the animosity of the imperial towns
“for a long time prevented the count
“of Wirtemberg from having any settled
“abode. He had great difficulty to re-
“cover his wife from the hands of his
“enemies, into which she had fallen,
“notwithstanding the precaution that had
“been employed. At length the bishop
“of Strasburg afforded them an asylum;
“but, being a relation of the countess,
“we were afraid of entrusting Ida to his
“care.

“Our residence in the forest was of short
“duration, and the first place to which
“we repaired was Nuremberg. The
“loquacity of Maria quickly discovered
“that we were fugitive and alienated vas-
“sals of the count of Wirtemberg, and
“we were accordingly received with civi-
“lity, and even with kindness. Here I
“espoused her, having however been pre-
“viciously

“viouſly obliged, before I could obtain
“her conſent, to bind myſelf by an oath,
“not to reſtore Ida to her parents till ſhe
“ſhould be ten years of age, and in the
“mean time to let her paſs for my daugh-
“ter. I immediately reſumed the pro-
“feſſion of ſculptor, to which I had been
“bred. Some pieces which I executed
“were conſiderably admired and gained
“me reputation. I was chiefly employed
“in decorating churches and convents.
“At length I was invited to Prague, where
“the conſtruction of the cathedral de-
“tained me ſo long, that I became attach-
“ed to the city, where I had reaped con-
“ſiderable emoluments, and I determined
“to make it my future abode. Mean-
“while Ida grew up. Her beauty, and
“an education which we gave her ſuit-
“able to her birth, occaſioned her to be
“noticed, ſo that we could not permit
“her to appear in public. Once how-
“ever my imprudent wife urged me to
“depart from the rule of conduct I had
“laid down, and our ſuppoſed daughter
“made her appearance at your majeſty’s
“nuptials; a ſtep, young princeſs, that
“proved the ſource of all the miſfortunes
“which has ſince befallen you.”

“Say rather of all my felicity,” cried
Ida, tenderly preſſing the hand of Sophia
to her lips.

“My wife,” continued Munster, “had
“her schemes. She was continually re-
“proaching herself for having deprived
“her dear princess of the advantages of
“her birth, and yet was far from consent-
“ing that I should restore her to her fa-
“ther. She was in reality desirous of
“raising her to distinction, and obtaining
“her a fortune, without the succour of the
“count. She could not forgive his blind
“attachment to his second wife, and con-
“sequent neglect of his child, and she
“therefore hated him, too cordially to
“consent that he should have the plea-
“sure of contributing to the future happi-
“ness of Ida. The hopes of my wife
“were chiefly grounded on the favour of
“the empress; and she felicitated herself
“on the passion for Ida, which she soon
“discovered in the young Herman of
“Unna, and seconded it the more readily,
“because she knew that he was an object
“of enmity to the count of Wirtemberg.
“she formed a thousand projects, com-
“mitted a thousand indiscretions, till at
“length she so involved in difficulties her,
“whom she was endeavouring to render
“happy, that she was on the point of fall-
“ing a victim to her ill-advised measures,
“when I happily interposed, and took per-
“haps the only step that could have saved
“her. I discovered her birth to her fa-
“ther.

“ther. There was no difficulty in con-
“vincing him of the fact; her features,
“and the marks she had brought into the
“world with her, being too well known
“to him to permit him to doubt. His
“wife had been dead above a twelve-
“month; and having lately lost the only
“daughter that he supposed remained to
“him, and who had been betrothed to the
“duke of Brunswic, he was not displeased
“at thus unexpectedly finding another.
“Thus the heart of count Wirtemberg
“was sufficiently at liberty for him to see
“with pleasure, her whom he had for-
“merly abandoned, whom he believed to
“be dead, or at least for ever lost to him,
“and to whom he has just vowed, that
“every trace of what she has suffered,
“shall be obliterated by his kindness.”

Here Munster closed his recital. Ida
sighed, and Sophia promised to act the
part of a parent to her, and take her under
her immediate care, should the count
prove unfaithful to his word. “The
“point most important at present,” added
she, “is to devise, my dear friend, the
“means of expediting your union with
“Herman. Life is short; we cannot be-
“gin too soon to be happy. Fathers are
“often capricious. They conceive that
“they consult sufficiently the happiness
“of their children, by marrying them to

“ great lords, who possess neither love, nor
“ virtue, nor accomplishments, and whose
“ sole merit is their rank. Ah! Ida, I
“ know more instances than one of such
“ alliances!”

As she said this, a profound sigh escaped her, which her friend knew perfectly how to interpret. Ida thanked her for the interest she took in her welfare, and entreated her to attempt nothing in her favour at present, but to wait rather the operation of time, which frequently brought things to pass, that, in prospect appeared impracticable; a reflection dictated by prudence, which however Sophia quickly forgot.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IDA took leave of the empress; and Munster, to whom she was fond of paying every mark of respect, having nothing so much at heart as to display to the world that she still retained for him a filial regard, and was not ashamed of having been reputed his daughter . . . Munster, I say, accompanied her home, where they spent together some delightful hours in conversation.

sation. The old man's narrative had excited in her breast the liveliest gratitude. The variety of dangers from which he had extricated her; the affection more than parental, with which he had received her, when abandoned by every human being; the uniform disinterestedness with which he had ever preferred her welfare to his own; . . . what subjects of reflection to a heart glowing like hers with sensibility! At his request, however, she put some little restraint upon herself in public, but, alone with him, she gave vent to her feelings and let loose all the tenderness of her soul.

In their present interview, hours had glided away unperceived, and to finish what they had to say would have required as many more; for the princess took this opportunity of disclosing to Munster the desire she felt of having constantly near her, the person whom she had so long called by the endearing name of mother, and to whom she owed such great obligations: a desire with which, she had no doubt, the count of Wirtemberg would readily comply.

Munster shook his head: he seemed neither to desire nor to hope this honour for his wife, and he was about to assign his reasons, when the arrival of the count was announced. Immediately they both

rose to meet him. He entered in visible agitation; his countenance portended a storm. He received the caresses of Ida with coldness, and made a sign to her venerable old friend to withdraw.

"I am astonished," said he, after having walked for some time up and down the room, "I am astonished that you have not yet forgotten the past events of your life. You are now the daughter of the count of Wirtemberg, and not of that plebeian, whom, instead of loading with favour, instead of suffering to be in your apartment for hours together, and of attending you in public, you ought to shun and detest for the injury he has done you."

"What, my father! shun, detest, so faithful a servant, the saviour, the protector of your daughter, when . . ."

"He has related to you, it seems, in the presence of the empress, the manner in which, like a thief, he stole you from me. And can you avoid perceiving the baseness of the deed? or are you blinded by the subterfuges he has invented to excuse himself; subterfuges that even were they true, would be no justification? It is in my power to punish him; but I would gladly waive the exercise of this power, in consideration of you. Let this content you; and
"urge

"urge me not by your conduct to extre-
"mities."

Ida, little accustomed to such remon-
strances from a parent, knew not what
answer to make, and was silent; while
her father continued to walk backwards
and forwards, in manifest displeasure, till
at length he thus resumed his discourse.

"I have suffered to-day in more ways
"than one on your account. In the
"morning I heard of things, that ap-
"peared to me incredible; and this even-
"ing, at court, I have been told of a cir-
"cumstance which leads me to doubt the
"purity of thy heart; and which if
"true...."

The aspect of the count began to be
terrible. Ida interrupted him. "My fa-
"ther, my dear father," said she, "look
"not thus sternly on your child! is it
"possible she can have been so unfortu-
"nate as to have occasioned you uneasi-
"ness, as to have offended you!"

"Yes, if she cannot answer me in the
"negative the questions I shall put to
"her. Is it true that the night I was
"first known to thee as thy father, the
"night when I found thee already risen
"and dressed at so early an hour, is it true
"that thou hadst then a young man with
"thee, who, on my appearance, leaped
"from the balcony into the garden, and

“ that that young man was Herman of
“ Unna? Thou art silent Thou
“ canst not justify thyself? It is then
“ so? But I have another question.
“ To whom am I indebted for the en-
“ treaties and importunities with which
“ the empress has just been tormenting
“ me upon the subject of the love that ex-
“ ists between thee and Herman, that shoot
“ of an accursed stock? Is it possible
“ that my daughter, knowing, as she
“ does, that the entreaties of sovereigns
“ are commands, can have involved me
“ in such a dilemma? What, still
“ silent? Well then, I know thee;
“ and I know also what I have to do;
“ thy sentence is pronounced.”

The count of Wirtemberg left his daughter, and left her in a consternation that nothing could augment, saving the order she that evening received to prepare for a journey, reasons of importance requiring, as she was told, that she should quit the court with speed.

Ida well knew the reasons of this hasty departure. She saw all her hopes vanish into air. She regretted having confided in a person, whose zeal to serve her had ruined every thing. She repented every step she had taken, even her love for Herman, because she perceived that she should thereby render unhappy a father whom

whom she respected, whom she was desirous of pleasing, and to whose happiness she would have been glad to contribute. To be separated from Munster and the empress, who were so dear to her, and to be ignorant of her own fate, were melancholy subjects of reflection; yet to these she wholly abandoned herself, without thinking of going to bed, leaving to her women the care of the preparations she had been ordered to make. Accordingly her father, when he came to her the next morning, found her already dressed: a circumstance that, in spite of the redness of her eyes, which betrayed the tears she had shed, proved that she knew how to obey, and that she was of a character sufficiently gentle to yield to whatever might be required of her.

The observation of this induced count Everard to bestow some endearments on his daughter. He assured her that he loved her sincerely, and would make her happy if she could resolve to obey him; in other words, if she would sacrifice to him her dearest wishes, a trifle, that, in his opinion, ought not to be attended with the smallest difficulty.

Ida was conducted to the empress, to take leave of her. The conversation between Sophia and the count was extremely cold. Part of her dissatisfaction ap-

peared to fall even on his daughter, for it was not till the end of the visit that Ida received from her one of those tender embraces to which she had been accustomed. "Ungrateful girl," said Sophia, "you love me not! you have not the courage to resist those who would tear you from me! Say, count Everard, will you carry your cruelty so far as to deprive me of my best and dearest friend, should she be desirous not to quit me?"

The count knew his daughter sufficiently to believe that he could depend on her. He replied, therefore, that if she felt the least disinclination to obey him, she was at liberty to avow it. Ida perfectly understood the answer that was expected from her, and, as she was incapable of falsehood, she said nothing.

Sophia once more embraced her, but with less affection. The count pressed her hand, to testify the satisfaction he felt from her conduct, and they withdrew, attended by all the ladies of the empress, whose eyes, in spite of the pains which they took to conceal it, betrayed the pleasure they experienced at the departure of their companion.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE princess of Ratibor may be classed among those women, never wanting in a court, who, to amuse their mistress, or gratify their own curiosity, are ever on the hunt for scandal. Ida had long been the object of her particular attention, and it may be presumed, that when acknowledged for princess of Wirtemberg, this envious dame would not be less eager to watch her steps and blazon her actions. She was acquainted with every circumstance that passed in the most secret retirement of our heroine, and even the nocturnal visit in the balcony had not escaped her knowledge. She was not absolutely sure that the young man was Herman; but she boldly ventured the conjecture, and thus stumbled by accident on the truth. She had already several times attempted to injure the reputation of Ida, and deprive her of the empress's esteem; and with the same views she triumphantly related this adventure, embellished with circumstances tending to give it an appearance of criminality: but as Sophia had already been made acquainted with the affair, in the naked simplicity of truth, she failed in her attempt, and was accordingly obliged to change her battery. It was she who acquainted

quainted the count of Wirtemberg with the occurrence, and who dictated to the centinel what answers to make in case he should be examined on the subject. And thus, by her indefatigable zeal, did she at last attain the accomplishment of what she had so much at heart, the removal of the object of her detestation.

Ida remarked indeed, when her father took leave of the princess of Ratibor, that they were on better terms than usual; but she was too ingenuous to divine the cause; too ingenuous to suspect, (though at the door of the anti-chamber she saw them in earnest conversation,) what, had she known would have driven her to despair. For the count had requested the princess of Ratibor to watch the proceedings of Herman, who she said had been seen in the city so lately as the preceding evening; and to take some means, if he could be laid hold of, of compelling him to renounce Ida for ever.

Count Everard, it is probable, was not aware of all the malignity of her whom he charged with such a commission: for he surely sought not the ruin of Herman, and would perhaps have wished him a long and happy life, provided it was spent at the distance of a hundred leagues from his daughter.

Meanwhile some good genius interfered
in

in the preservation of the young knight. What the princess of Ratibor had said was true. He was still in the neighbourhood, where he had remained to watch the motions of Ida, and find some opportunity of speaking to her. By his extreme vigilance he learned the departure of his mistress just before she stepped into the carriage; and the place having no longer any attractions for him he instantly quitted it, and thus escaped the dangers by which he was surrounded.

His intention was to follow her wherever she might go, and under a thousand different disguises, to try if he could not, by some lucky chance, obtain from her a word or a look. This he would probably have executed to their mutual injury, had not Heaven sent him a friend, by whose counsels he was induced to adopt a wiser plan of conduct. Herman, by means of the little stratagems he employed, had contrived to learn, that Ida and her father were to sleep the second night after their departure at a village with which he was acquainted. To this village he repaired by a shorter way than that usually taken by travellers; and as he waited there for his mistress, hoping at least to enjoy the pleasure of seeing her alight, and of hearing her voice, he was accosted on a sudden by his old friend Munster.

Our

Our manuscript does not inform us, whether this worthy plebeian was actuated by the same views as the knight of fidelity ; it only says, that he totally reprobated those of the latter, and employed all the influence he had over his mind to induce him to renounce them.—“ And what,” said he, after Herman had opened to him his heart, will be the fruit of this mad “ project ? To lose your time in a wild-
“ goose chase ; to remain to eternity a
“ simple knight, who can never think of
“ becoming the son-in-law of the proud
“ count of Wirtemberg ; to let slip a thousand opportunities of acquiring glory ;
“ to endanger your life, your honour,
“ and even the honour of your mistress,
“ should you be discovered ; and should
“ you not be discovered, to spend whole
“ years in useless labours, in order to
“ arrive at an end which can never be so
“ attained, and to discover, too late, that
“ you have followed the shadow when
“ you might have made giant strides
“ towards happiness. No, Sir knight,
“ this must not be. Take the advice of
“ an old friend, and quit this place ; quit
“ it instantly, before she who may shake
“ your resolution shall arrive. Go, resume
“ the office you quitted, when you hastened to the succour of Ida. You left
“ Sigismund in evil hands. Love hitherto
“ may

“ may be a sufficient excuse for your conduct; but nothing can justify your
“ longer delaying to fulfil the duty you
“ owe to your sovereign. Strange rumours are current concerning him; if
“ well founded, your means of serving
“ him will I fear be of little avail; but
“ your fidelity may re-animate the hopes
“ of this unfortunate prince. Perhaps at
“ this moment you are the only person
“ sincerely attached to him: and can you
“ have the cruelty to abandon him?
“ Would you leave him wholly destitute
“ of a friend.

In this manner did the old man endeavour to awaken in the soul of Herman a love of glory, of duty and of fidelity to his sovereign; to guard him against a hopeless passion, and to rouse him from the life of indolence, so unworthy of him, to which he was on the point of devoting himself. And he had the satisfaction to see his endeavours crowned with success. Herman vowed to remain eternally faithful to Ida, but promised at the same time that it should not be at the expence of his other duties. Munster on his part, engaged to watch unremittingly over the young princess, and they took leave of each other sincere and cordial friends.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HERMAN departed. The information given him by Munster of the doubtful situation of Sigismond was confirmed to him on the road. In one place it was said, that he was yet not returned from the campaign against the infidels, and probably had fallen into their hands; in another, that he was in the power of still more dangerous enemies at home; sometimes that he was mortally wounded; then that he was dead. These rumours however decreased as Herman advanced into Hungary, and totally died away before he reached the capital, where he found that preparations were making with royal magnificence for the reception of his master.

As I am not writing the history of Sigismond, I shall speak of his concerns so far only as they have an immediate relation with the adventures of Herman. I shall therefore say nothing of the king's entrance into Presburg, where he was received with loud acclamations by the people, who loved him in spite of his faults: neither shall I notice the crowd of nobles that surrounded him, or the mutual promises that were made in order to establish a good understanding between them and the monarch. No doubt, the levity, the liberti-

libertinism, the propensity to drinking, and the occasional cruelty of Sigismund, were sufficient causes of discontent to a considerable number of his subjects; and he had obtained no victory, he had made no conquest, the splendor of which might have thrown these qualities into shade: yet, for some reason or other, the past was promised to be forgotten on both sides, and Sigismund was but too ready to shut his eyes against a thousand marks of disloyalty and treason manifested by the principal lords of his court, and particularly the two Garas.

The numerous guests who were assembled in the place on the evening of the king's arrival, kept Herman, who burned with the desire of seeing him, at a distance. His situation was embarrassing, and he knew not how to act. To his former patron general Gara, who had found him incorruptible in the late campaign against the Turks, he was an object of detestation; and Herman, in his turn, felt no esteem for a man whom he knew to be the secret enemy of his master, much less could he bring himself to ask of him a favour. At length the young knight determined to be his own introducer. Accordingly he placed himself near the king. Sigismund observed him. The face of Herman was not of that insipid and common-place sort
which .

which one may meet twenty times without recollecting a feature; the king beside, when he last saw him, was in a situation too critical for him to forget a single individual of those who surrounded him, and much less the person who had been the principal actor.

At first Sigismund had some difficulty in collecting his ideas. He appeared thoughtful, rubbed his forehead, and then turning to Andrew Gara, who was seated by his side: "Whence comes it," said he, "that often in the midst of our
" joy and conviviality, melancholy remembrances so suddenly assail us?
" One of the most perilous events of my
" life at this moment presents itself to
" my eyes. Can you not guess what I
" mean? Know you not who that young
" man is?"

Andrew bowed, and was silent. "But perhaps," continued Sigismund, "you
" may be ignorant of the transaction; you
" were not present; it was your brother.
" You would not so cowardly have deserted me. I have promised to forget
" the treachery of my enemies, but never
" will I forget the services of my friends.
" I was, as I have said, cowardly deserted. Already was my head exposed to
" the falchion of Achmet, and there was
" but a step between me and death, when
" a troop

“ a troop of chevaliers came to my deli-
“ verance. My horse had been killed
“ under me; my helmet and buckler
“ were hacked to pieces; and I had no
“ weapon but my sabre. The leader of
“ this brave troop leaped from his horse,
“ gave me his shield, and with his own
“ helmet covered my head. What hap-
“ pened afterwards I know not, for I be-
“ came insensible to every thing around
“ me. But there remains deeply engra-
“ ven in my mind, the remembrance of
“ my deliverer, whose countenance seemed
“ radiant as that of an angel descended
“ from Heaven. It is that countenance,
“ which now recalls to my mind the par-
“ ticulars of the horrid scene: I discern
“ it amongst the crowd of those who sur-
“ round my table: it displays the fea-
“ tures of my loyal servant Herman of
“ Unna, so often calumniated. Draw
“ near, intrepid youth, by whom my life
“ has been saved! receive the thanks of
“ thy king, and assurance of his favour!”

While Sigismund was speaking, Her-
man had listened with attention, that he
might not lose a word of what concerned
him so nearly. When the king had finish-
ed, our hero, transported with joy, fell
at his feet, kissed his hand, and bathed his
knees with tears. What glory for him,

what

what satisfaction, to be thus praised before a thousand witnesses by a sovereign, who had always appeared to slight him, and to whom he had given a hundred proofs of attachment, without his seeming to have paid them the least attention!

After these effusions of joy, our young knight modestly retired amongst the gentlemen in waiting; but Sigismond frequently turned to look for him, and at length forbade him to quit his side.

The proud nobles, who were at table with the king, appeared to have taken no part in the scene they witnessed. They kept a profound silence, and deigned not to pay the least compliment to the young warrior, whom Sigismond had so distinguishingly honoured.

Thus he received no congratulations, but from those who waited with him at table, among whom, he recognized many an old friend and comrade. But of all the persons he met at this festival none gave him so much pleasure as a young man, whom he had known when a child, and with whom he had formerly a misunderstanding at the court of Wincestaus. He was in the number of knights attendants of king Sigismond; and as, in the war against the Mussulmen, Herman had seen him act with valour, the remembrance of past wrongs was entirely obliterated in his mind,

mind, and replaced by a sincere attachment and esteem. It was Kunzman of Hertingshausen, who had ascribed to Herman, when page to Winceslaus, the necessity he was under of flying from the emperor's court. The reader will no doubt recollect the circumstance, related to Munster by the knight of fidelity, when he gave him the history of his younger years.

Kunzman, who, when he met with Herman in the course of the campaign against the Turks, appeared to have forgotten his ancient enmity, accosted him on this occasion as a real friend. The place was not calculated for a long conversation; a squeeze by the hand, and "my dear Herman," "my dear Hertingshausen," were all that passed; the rest was postponed to the interview they promised themselves the succeeding night.

The king, engaged for some time in a serious conversation with the two Gara's, had ceased to look after Herman: the guests had drank largely: it was not the cup of pleasure that circulated round the table, it was the cup of infernal discord. Herman had long observed with pain, that the nobles who sat opposite his master paid him not the respect which was due to him. Grim discontent, or malignant joy, was legible in their countenances, inflamed by the intoxicating wines of Hungary. Much
too

too was he displeased with the discourse which the two brothers directed to the king. They appeared to have entirely forgotten to whom they were speaking. The subject was the late unfortunate campaign, in which the king was so near losing his life. Reproaches passed on both sides; these reproaches were repelled with mutual warmth; but soon the general and his brother spoke in so loud and lofty a tone, as to drown the single voice of the monarch.

“What!” said Herman to Hertingshausen, putting his hand to his sword, “shall we suffer our master to be thus insulted?” The uproar increased; all rose from their seats; here and there sabres were drawn, and the king was at length so pressed, that the ill designs harboured against his person were no longer doubtful. Instantly Herman drew his sword, and his example was followed by Hertingshausen, and all the other young knights who were present. Sigismund was thrown down, and his enemies dared employ against him weapons, which to all true knights are prohibited. Upon this Herman seized Andrew Gara by the throat and plucked him forcibly from the body of his master; the others did the same by the general; the king was rescued, and the knights gained the field of battle. But soon the
match

match became too unequal: a considerable body of cavaliers was introduced, and the defenders of Sigismond were soon beaten to the ground, others disarmed, and all, as well as the king, treated with the utmost indignity, and loaded with chains.

Two only however of these had the honour eventually to share his fate, Herman and Hertingshausen. The others, almost all effeminate courtiers, were easily turned from their duty, either by promises, or by threats; and none of them envied the two loyal servants of Sigismond the advantage of participating their master's misfortunes, of being like him ill-treated, fettered, put into a covered waggon, and conducted to a place where the artful nobles hoped they should be able to deal with the king as they pleased, without having any thing to apprehend from the people.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE prisoners were conducted to the castle of Soclos. Herman knew this castle to be the principal seat of the Gara family, and could therefore easily imagine what treatment his unfortunate master had

had to expect in a place where his enemies enjoyed unlimited power. His expectations, however, which foreboded nothing but insult and death to Sigismund, were for once disappointed.

The event which led to the seizure of the king was by no means accidental, but the result of a previously concerted scheme. It had been resolved to secure his person, dethrone him, and put another in his place: but in the execution of this plan, the line chalked out had been outrageously departed from, and it was presently thought adviseable to assume some appearance of decency and moderation. Intoxication had made the enemies of Sigismund forget, that he whom they had thus treated as a vile slave was still their sovereign, and that this disgraceful proceeding would bring public dishonour on themselves. When the fumes of wine therefore had somewhat evaporated, though the Garas did not less burn with the desire of vengeance than before, they were ashamed to persevere in a conduct, that might ruin their pretensions to the crown of Hungary, and induce the people to take the part of the contemptible son of Charles IV.

The king's fetters were accordingly taken off; and, from the dungeon to which he had at first been consigned, he was

was transferred to a splendid apartment: he was even asked, if he wished to be waited on by those gentlemen of his court, who were prisoners with him; and, on his answering in the affirmative, they were enlarged for that purpose.

The situation of Sigismond was now supportable; and it became still more so, when Nicholas and Andrew, the two Garas, obliged to quit the castle on account of some affairs that required their attendance at the capital, relinquished to their mother-in-law the care of the royal prisoner.

Before I proceed with my narrative, it may not be amiss to give the reader some account of this lady, Helen Gara, widow of the deceased Nicholas, whom Sigismond had formerly put to death, and step-mother to the general and the governor. She was a young and handsome widow of twenty-five, who had not been so inconsolable at the loss of her old and decrepid husband, as to retain any very durable hatred against his murderer. It is true she had talked of nothing but vengeance as long as her sons-in-law were within hearing, and appeared to enter into their views, because she found it necessary to the compassing her own: but the imprisonment of Sigismond in the castle of Soclos, inspired her with designs

very different from those entertained by his enemies.

The love of pleasure and the love of sway constituted the grand features of her character. Sigismond, notwithstanding his age, was one of the handsomest princes of his time; he was a king, he was brother to the emperor, and would in all probability succeed him, if Wincefflaus should die or be dethroned. What subjects for reflection; what allurements to a woman such as we have described the mistress of the castle! Could she hesitate? could she remain in doubt, whether to favour the unjust designs of her sons-in-law, the accomplishment of which might probably be remote, even did they ever succeed, or to ingratiate herself with a prince, who might repay her kindness by instantly sharing with her his bed and his throne?

In imagination Helen already saw herself the wife of Sigismond, and swaying with him the first sceptre in the world; nor was she tardy in taking such steps as she deemed most conducive to the attainment of her wishes. She enjoyed the perfect confidence of both her step-sons: she knew that they would be some time absent, endeavouring to place the crown on the head of young Ladislaus: and she hastened to execute the projects she had formed.

The king had one whole wing of the castle appropriated to his use. His court, hitherto composed solely of Kunsman and Herman of Unna, was now augmented. He was treated as a sovereign, had permission to walk in the gardens, and there was nothing to remind him of his being a prisoner, but the guards that always accompanied, at a certain distance, him and his two gentlemen.

Sigismond rejoiced at this change in his lot, which elated him with hope. He sought to develope the cause; and he was not long in discovering, that it originated in the benevolence of the princess. The portrait of Helen decorated all his apartments, and he had sometimes seen the original, at a distance in the garden, not without admiration.

There was no snare so dangerous to Sigismond, as female beauty. Whilst, however, he paid homage to its charms, he had too high an opinion of himself to think any woman could resist him. With the sentiments of Helen he was soon acquainted; her action spoke a language sufficiently plain. His love of ease, and the susceptibility of his heart, were daily flattered by new attentions; and his gratitude, his inclination for the fair enchantress, who had the art of rendering his prison so agreeable, were heightened by

her having the address to avoid him, and give him no opportunity of thanking her in person. The view of her portrait, and the praises continually bestowed on her by those about him, transformed his gratitude into the most violent love. He burned with the desire of seeing her. Secret proposals were then made, emissaries sent from one to the other, and meetings took place, till the parties were perfectly agreed. Decency led them to endeavour to throw a veil over their proceedings; but the veil was so transparent, that it left the inmates of the castle little to divine.

In this affair, Kunzman of Hertingshausen acted the principal part. He displayed peculiar talents for such negotiations, and completely acquired by it the confidence of his master.

Herman had no concern in the business; nor was there a man in the world less proper for the office. He knew but one species of love, that which he felt for Ida, and of which pure hearts alone are susceptible. An amorous intrigue was deemed by him incompatible with virtue; and he was not politic enough to conceal the disgust with which it inspired him. When yet a page in the court of Winceslaus, impudence and libertinism had been seen by him under all their most odious forms.

and

and he sincerely regretted, that similar scenes were about to be renewed here, by a prince whom he loved, and in whom he discovered with sorrow, the same proneness to debauchery, as had disgusted him in his imperial brother.

Sigismund, not being accustomed to read in the eyes of those about him, a secret disapprobation of his conduct, Herman was kept at a distance, and the wily messenger of love, the complaisant Hertingshausen, employed on every occasion.

As Herman's attachment to his master had considerably diminished, he was less sensible to the preference given another, and envied not Kunzman the favour of a prince whom he would now willingly have quitted. "To what purpose is the effeminate life I am leading here?" would he say to himself. "Is this the way to raise myself to distinction, and render myself worthy of the princess of Wirtemberg? Oh! fly, Herman, fly! thou art here wasting thy time in a manner still more reprehensible, than that depicted by Munster, in colours so disadvantageous."

